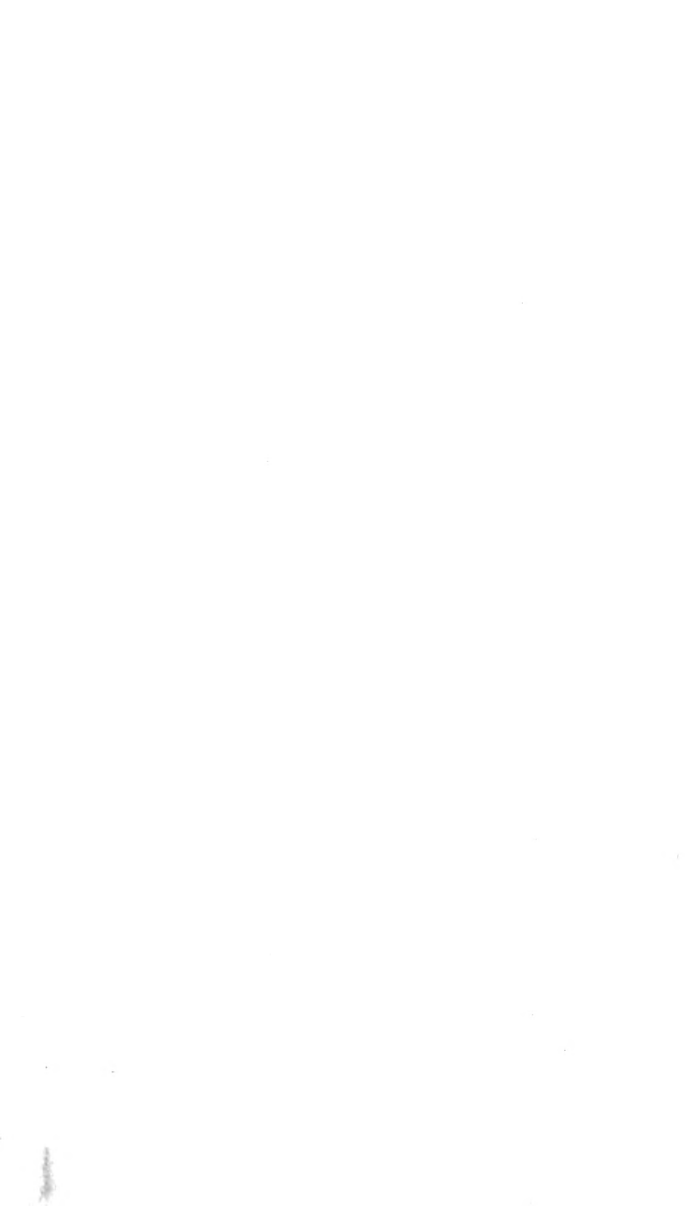


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SOME DISCOURSES,
EPISTLES, AND LETTERS,

BY THE LATE

SAMUEL FOTHERGILL.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,

SOME DISCOURSES

BY THE LATE

CATHERINE PHILLIPS,

BOTH OF THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS.

NOW FIRST PUBLISHED.

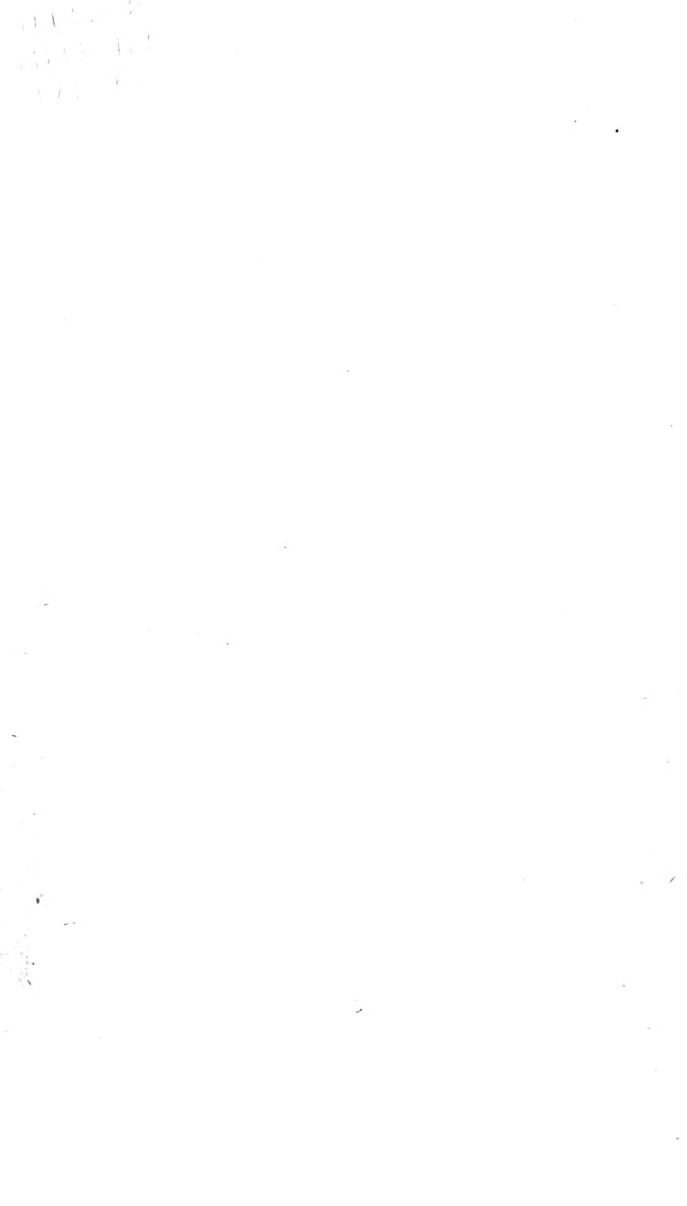
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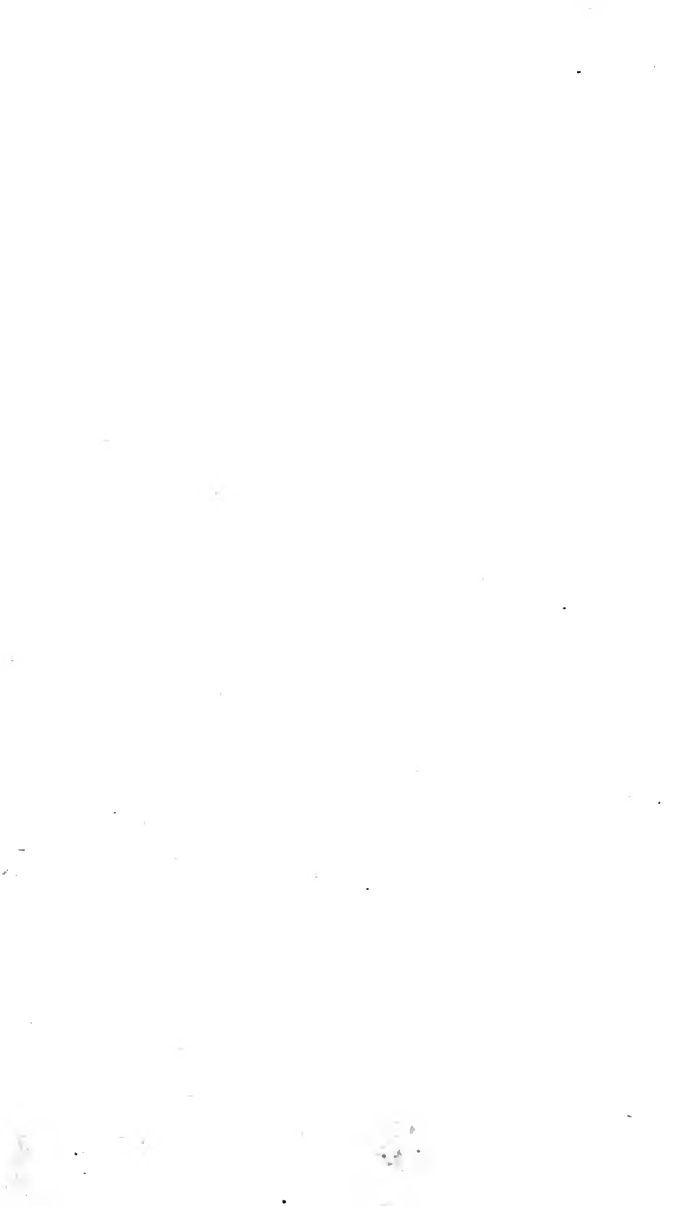


DISCOURSES, &c.

BY THE LATE

SAMUEL FOTHERGILL.

116679



The following Account of the late
SAMUEL FOTHERGILL
Is extracted from the Gentleman's Maga-
zine, for 1773, page 220.

TO commemorate the virtues of great and eminent men, who have been honorable in their day, is a tribute due to their memory :— a tribute which sensible men pay from emotions of respectful gratitude, and from a hope that it may prove an incentive to the living to emulate their virtues.

Of this class the late Mr. *Samuel Fothergill*, of Warrington, an eminent preacher among the Quakers, and brother to Dr. Fothergill, of London, may with great justice be ranked. I knew him well, and had the happiness of his occasional acquaintance ; I call it the happiness, because I never enjoyed the company of any person from whom I received more real satisfaction; and, however diversified with affliction the future part of my life may prove, I shall never remember those hours I have spent with him but with peculiar pleasure. He was a happy compound of the Gentleman and the Christian; the virtues and amiable qualities

qualities of each character being admirably blended in him. Graceful in his person and deportment, easy and affable in his manner, he commanded both respect and love. He possessed natural abilities far superior to the generality of mankind, and improved them to the utmost of his power. Well read both in books and men, his studies did not terminate in barren speculation, but the great truths of religion were deeply implanted in his heart, and beamed forth illustriously in a benevolent Christian conduct.

As a member of civil society, he was exceedingly useful, filling up the social and relative duties of life with great propriety. Blameless in his manners, kind, charitable, and ready on all occasions to devote his time and talents to promote the best of all causes, the good of mankind, he lived beloved, and his loss is deeply deplored by all who had the happiness of knowing his worth.

As a Preacher, he was far superior to most that fill that station : found in important doctrines of the Christian Faith, he endeavoured to promote them universally, with the greatest energy of language, and the most persuasive eloquence. In this capacity he was, indeed

deed, truly great; and his greatness received additional lustre from his humility. Although followed by numbers, and courted by persons of superior rank and station, and admired by those of all persuasions, the applause, which his eminence justly acquired, did not exalt, but evidently tended to make him humble. He was a person of an enlarged mind, zealous without bigotry, and a steady promoter of universal charity. In his sermons, it was evident to all his intelligent hearers, that he deeply felt the force of those solemn truths he delivered; and his manner of displaying them was so justly emphatical, that none but the insensible or obdurate could withstand their force, or remain unaffected by them. He travelled much, from the most disinterested motives, among his friends in Great Britain, Ireland, and the American Colonies, for the promotion of piety and Christian virtue, and for the advancement of that faith and religion in which he most surely believed, and was so eminent an example.

During the latter part of his life he was much indisposed in his health; but (as I have heard from the best authority) perfectly happy and easy in his mind, having an evidence
in

in himself, that he was approaching that state of felicity which is prepared for the righteous.

This evidence supported him through the remains of a painful life, and was his unfailing hope in the awful hour of death, which (when near his end) he declared “ had “ no terrors, nor would the grave have any “ victory:” and also added, “ that as he “ had lived, so he should close with the most “ unshaken assurance, that he had not followed cunningly-devised fables, but the “ pure living and eternal substance.”—Such was his exemplary life!—Such his triumphant death!—A life so spent is truly honourable,—and such a death unspeakably glorious!

DISCOURSE

*Delivered at the Meeting-House of the People
called Quakers, at Bradford,*

The 17th of the 8th Month, 1770.

By S. FOTHERGILL.

ALTHOUGH there is (unhappily for themselves) a spirit of dissipation, and of incredulity with respect to matters of the highest importance, too visibly prevalent in many; yet it is pleasing and comfortable to me to have reason to believe, that in many others, an inquiry is raised after the way to life and salvation.

“O Lord! who shall shew us any good?”

An inquiry worthy of being inculcated with sincerity and impartiality; and I have

no doubt of its being crowned with the desired success, to every honest and sincere inquirer.

I think that the days in which we live, through the awakening virtue of divine mercy, furnish many invitations like that which the evangelical prophet gave forth, with the gracious authority of the Author and Well-spring of all that is good; an invitation which hath sometimes warned me, and is affectionately raised in my heart towards many in this assembly.

“Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye
 “to the waters, and he that hath no
 “money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea,
 “come, buy wine and milk without money
 “and without price. Wherefore do ye
 “spend money for that which is not bread,
 “and your labour for that which satisfieth
 “not? Hearken diligently unto me, and
 “eat ye that which is good, and let your
 “soul delight itself in fatness.”

This is an invitation which may have little meaning or significancy in it to those who are strangers, unhappily strangers, to the beginning of that creating power of God, that would form and fashion them in holiness
 unto

unto glory. But it is expressive and intelligible to such minds as have been engaged in desires after the knowledge of Him, in whom they have professed to believe; and who have measurably witnessed the entrance of that Spirit, as both Light and Life, which is justly and pertinently called, the Quickening Spirit: for it is by the influence, and the enlivening, of this Quickening Spirit, we must be made (if we ever are made) living souls to God; initiated, and built up in that life which is eternally happy.

We are incapable of either hunger or thirst, but through the enlivening of this Quickening Spirit. Hunger and thirst are acts appertaining to life. The dead have not those sensations,—those that are naturally or spiritually dead: as it is through the efficacious work of that holy “wind that bloweth where it listeth,” that the dead “dry bones in the valley” have been drawn into a resemblance of mankind; are brought together; brought to their respective places in the heavenly body; quickened, raised, formed, an army to the living God.

The holy prophet knew it to be an utter impossibility for any power, short of the

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divine,

divine, creating power, to bring together those dead dry bones; and indeed the observation I confess seems worthy of that divine wisdom that delivered it. They were human bones; there was a degree of fitness in the form of their construction for membership and for assimilation one with another; but I conceive there was no inherent virtue or ability in those dead dry bones, to assimilate one to another; they had certainly laid till the consummation of all things, but for that supernatural breath, or wind of divine power, which re-animated them. And I freely own, that I believe something of this nature hath been impressed upon the minds of many in these days in which we live, that would teach them to make the quickening spirit their principal object in the rudiments of a divine life. To live in the obedience of an holy faith here, and to be raised to the enjoyment of endless good hereafter, is what I wish for all those the dust of Zion, when on their way to the holy habitation, where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary soul enjoys eternal rest.

And, as having received mercy and a degree of merciful experience from the Author
of

of my being, I find some engagement to point out some steps which have produced the first fruits of the spiritual creation of God; which have been a means of giving strength to some in their race, and of turning aside others from following the works of an unavailing profession.

For, as I have said, I have no doubt that the present awakening, upon many minds, is of a divine nature; and it may be known whence it proceeds. Its original may be traced, by considering whether it more abounds in heavenly desires, or in desires after the things of this life.

In the mystery of ungodliness there is a life which imitates the life of Christ; but it is a life that must die if ever we live acceptably to God. It is a life resulting from the love of this world (wherein the prince of the power of the air bears rule in the children of disobedience); that has its similitude and desires after heaven: "Let me die the death of the righteous." "Let me flee from the wrath to come." "Let me have an inheritance in the enjoyment of peace world without end:" though perhaps they may continue in the gratification

of corrupt nature. But these know not the life that is incorruptible and undefiled, which alone can obtain an inheritance in the kingdom of God. Flesh and blood cannot inherit this kingdom and its life. These wishes after a state of happiness, and desires after heaven, have frequently in many minds, proceeded from the language of vitiated, corrupted self, in which they would build up to themselves a visionary hope; and hence have estimated its success according to the warmth of desire after life, raised by flesh and blood, which cannot inherit the kingdom of God.

I am very apprehensive too many have mistaken this ardour of mind, for the kingdom of God; though in an un sanctified, unconverted state they have apprehended it has been of that thirst, supplied from the fountain of inexhaustible good: and in the warmth and fervor of the fire they have kindled, the kingdom of heaven hath suffered a kind of violence. In this mistaken state, by exalted pretences to religion and holiness, too many have endangered their present, and eternal happiness, and involved themselves in this most dangerous error;
whereby

whereby we may approach the resemblance of religion and amuse ourselves with an imitation of divine life, and at the same time not be actuated by it: this constitutes the danger under which we live, by entertaining desires after heaven, without being possessed of heavenly virtue.

‘ Let me be holy. Let me die the
‘ death destined for me to die.’ But heavenly desires take in the means as well as the end: ‘ O Lord, prepare me for thy kingdom. Let not thy hand spare, nor thine
‘ eye pity, till judgment pass upon the Mount
‘ of Edom, Esau’s first production. Turn
‘ thy hand upon me; purge away my dross;
‘ take away all my tin, and refine me as
‘ reprobate silver.’

As our desires are thus raised after the fountain of divine life, the glorious and holy Quickener will draw us into a similitude with our Author; and beget desires after heaven: not from motives of self-love or fear, but as the habitation of sanctified and holy spirits. Now this is to bring religion, and religious labour where it ought to exist; from the vision of the head, to the feeling emotions

emotions of the heart. The axe is laid to the root of that which is to be removed; and the virtue of this divine invitation becomes diffused and proclaimed throughout all the powers of the soul, as the axe is laid to every superfluous branch. “The axe is laid to the root of the tree, and every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down, and cast into the fire.”

“Ho! every one that thirsteth;” and in whom this divine life has arisen, and that take in this glorious object of heavenly love; which is not only the end, but the means, that can lift up the heart, with the hands to God in the heavens in ardent supplication, that he may refine, sanctify, and purge away their sins, wash them from all iniquity, and restore them by the assimilating virtue of divine grace into an union with the Holy Spirit, wherein we are enabled to serve him “In the beauty of holiness and in newness of life.”

“Ho, every one that thirsteth,” every one in whom a thirst has been raised after the animating virtue of the Quickening Spirit; may you continue possessed of an awful reverent sense of that goodness and mercy that
has

has thus evidently manifested itself, and taken place in your hearts.

There are some people too lofty for religion; alas! there are others who think themselves too low for religion; in whom the language of anxious solicitude is become depressed with fear; that are upon the verge of despair, not sufficiently considering the efficacious virtue of that power that would sanctify and prepare them in affliction, for his further use. Some are ready to lament their situation: ‘Will God accept the labour of my hands, for the mansions of light and life? What have I to do with religion? I would with great diligence endeavour to fill up the duties of my day, I would seek the consolation of my God, but it is forever hid from me.’ This has often been the language insinuated by the grand deceiver, and enemy of the happiness, of mankind. For though our heavenly Father, that clothes the season with variety, may have diversified the day with afflictions, they are a means to draw us nearer to himself: and know for thy encouragement, that there is an abundant access, through the one glorious mediator, the Lord Jesus Christ, by
A 5 whom

whom we are admitted into that “within
“the veil.” He listens to our requests, as to
the cherubim and seraphim with their holy,
holy, holy, in the habitation of light and
bliss. He is the God and Father of us all.
He is their God; he is my God; he is thy
God, thy Father, and thy friend, from whom
this proclamation of unbounded mercy is
gone forth; “Ho, every one that thirsteth,”
every one in whom this divine life is raised,
“come ye to the waters, and let him that
“hath no money come, yea, buy and eat,
“yea, come buy wine and milk without
“money, and without price.”

As it is of divine original that this life
proceeds, so it must be something adequate
to its own nature, that can satisfy it; some-
thing proceeding from the God of Life, and
a diffusion of his spirit. In the holy, ani-
mating virtue of it, we cry “Abba, Father!”
to him that dwells in glory.

This is the divine life; it is a life that will
strengthen. This is the life that is properly
called Religion; that ever lives in the spiri-
tual kingdom of the Almighty God and Lord
of heaven and earth; that lives throughout
all creation. It is the same life that breathes

to man in secret sorrow and complaint; it is in the fulness of the same life, that the loftiest oblation of worship ascends to the Majesty on high; and the holy incense of praise, from HIS sanctified families both in heaven and on earth, that are virtually united in the uniformity of divine and ardent love. We may be distinguished by various names, or different modes, with regard to circumstantial points; but it is the animating life of Christ that lives in all, and is one both in heaven and earth: it leads to itself, to thirst after itself, and even retains a consistency with its own nature; it has seen an end of profession, or imaginary views of things, and in it we become confirmed in the divine commandments of God. “I have seen an
“end of all perfection; but thy command-
“ment is exceeding broad.”

It is a life that cannot be satisfied with any thing that this world can afford; neither can it be content with the most specious profession of truth. It cannot be content with all the riches of a name; nor with the formality in which some take up their rest. It aspires after something greater, something

higher, that will sustain when the elements shall dissolve with fervent heat, and all things visible shall fade; when every specious pretence, or lofty profession, in which mankind unhappily place their confidence, will no longer prevail; but an uniform steady progress in that life of righteousness and holiness, wherein we are admitted to partake of the celestial banquet of divine love, and to obtain an entrance into the most holy place, to offer the holy incense of worship with the first born among many generations, in the love and life of the Lord Jesus Christ.

There is a probability sometimes of those that have been quickened and enlivened, who have received a measure of the heavenly gift that would qualify and prepare them for eternal life, there is a probability of these turning aside from the spirit of life, into "The oldness of the letter;" turning from a steady progress in the knowledge of Him in whom they have believed, into a dependence upon exterior rites, and shadowy performances; a figurative resemblance of something they would gladly hope acceptable in the sight of God.

I have

I have seen instances in the course of my life of some whose souls have been awakened to a thirst after good by the animating virtue of divine life in the Alpha, or first beginning of his spiritual creation, wherein have been formed desires after heaven; and yet they have turned aside from the arduous, laborious, steady following on their way, and (if I may be allowed the expression) have lost themselves in the flowery fields of imagination. These have been ready to think that they have attained a sufficient knowledge of religion, and religious duties; and thus knowledge has been substituted for practice; the musing of the head, for the vital sensations of the heart; a profession, without a substantial possession, of its virtue; and thus they are lost in the fields of imagination, and the mysterious paths of self-sufficient merit. They have lost that light which hath graciously visited them; and that holy sense of innocency, which once adorned their minds with heavenly, divine, affections; wherein had been opened a door of hope and consolation to the thirsty soul. Alas! that any should thus fall away from their eternal interest, by neglecting the duties of their day, and becoming

coming intent upon and fixed in the notional part, without the obedience of faith and a steady attention to the refreshing effects of the “Day spring from on high.” For as happiness consists in the enjoyment of essential good, may you so follow on as to know it fashioning you in every Christian virtue, and thus become confirmed in the possession of divine and ardent charity. But beware of that “knowledge that puffeth up” and tends not to edification. May you thus endeavour to increase in the stability of wisdom, and a steady advancing from glory to glory, and from one degree of faith to another, in a daily filial dependance upon him who is “willing to save and able to deliver to the uttermost, all them that come unto God, by him.”

The holy apostle seemed to observe the lamentable state of the Galatian churches amongst whom he had laboured, and raised the first fruits of a divine visitation, wherein many were quickened to a sense of good, and yet expostulates with them after this manner, “O! foolish Galatians; who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes, Jesus Christ
“hath

“hath been evidently set forth, crucified
“among you.” These, having begun in the spirit, thought to be made perfect in the flesh. But it is not any act which the flesh is capable of performing, or multiplicity of external services, as the means of salvation, that can ever attain the end. For here, too many souls are become strangers to the spirituality of the Christian faith, and are alienated from the spring of divine knowledge, arising in the dependant thirsty soul. It visits you oftener than the morning. It would raise desires after the enjoyment of divine life, in all those minds which attentively view its discoveries, to observe that obedience keep pace with the knowledge revealed; that the duties of the day are filled up with propriety. This would lead the mind where it ought to be led; that is, into a close and vigilant inquiry after the state and condition of our own souls; what is of God, and what is contrary to his heavenly will.

Hearing is not worship. The labour of the voice, or a multitude of words, is not worship. These simply cannot constitute the essential part of divine service; for though
we

we may pronounce all the truths recorded in holy writ, they cannot help us to utter the secret cry, Lord ! Lord ! prepare me for thy kingdom ; they can never redeem us from the powers of death, hell, and the grave, or impart the effects of vital religion. The work of righteousness is deeper than any superficial form, it is higher than a mere profession, or name ; even than the most excellent and divine truths that ever were uttered by man. What then is divine worship ? since it is not the labour of the tongue, nor proceeds from the head ; what is it but the secret aspirations of the soul to God, arising in the humble and enlightened mind ? “ I
“ will pray with the spirit, and with the un-
“ derstanding also,” whether I use words, or no words ; whether language fade, or whether it do not. We have occasion for language in the mutual engagements, or converse, one with another ; but the holy infinite Spirit, by one instinctive act of vision, beholds all the various states and conditions of mankind. “ I will look towards thy holy
“ temple.” The penetrating eye that bounds infinity, includes the most secret thoughts and intents of every heart. “ I will look
“ towards

“towards thy holy temple;” and in this lock, the mind is prepared to offer an acceptable sacrifice to the Lord of heaven and the whole earth.

Beware of having begun in the spirit, and of following the fleshly performances in those things which may present themselves as a resemblance of religious duties. Be what you are, not by a form or profession, or any contrivance of mankind; but be what you are by the grace of God; and then I have no doubt but the thirst in many will again increase: and “blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.” This blessing was pronounced by him that never failed, nor ever will, in the performance of the covenant he has made. “Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness.” Here heavenly desires are raised after substantial good; the affections are properly directed in pursuit of a divine temper, and prepared to receive the impressions of an heavenly love.

“Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.” This is a promise that he would graciously accomplish in the experience of mankind,

mankind, more and more universally; a promise to supply the hunger of such as may have refused comfort, and that substitute a similitude, instead of practical virtue; to whom appears applicable the mysterious meaning of that expression which was formerly the language of the church: "I charge
 " you, O ye daughters of Jerufalem, by the
 " hinds, and by the roes of the field, that ye
 " stir not up, nor awake my love, until he
 " please:" or as in better words, and more properly expressed, "I charge you, O ye
 " daughters of Jerufalem, that ye stir not
 " up, nor awake my love, by the hinds and
 " by the roes of the field, until he please." These are the light footed imaginations, in which perhaps the mind may become in some measure animated, and at times stirred up. But having wandered into the mountains of vision, the mind very frequently exercises itself in acts of superficial devotion, and the strict observation of exterior forms; and by this means is lost in the fields of imagination. Thus is lost the capacity of distinguishing betwixt that which is of a divine and heavenly nature (that awakening love that would arise in the demonstration
 of

of power), and the effects of an unstable mind; betwixt that universal righteousness of Christ, and a life in the various amusements of time, like the hinds and the roes of the field, that wander at will, not content to await the wakening of his “love until he please.

“Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye
“to the waters; and let him that hath no
“money come, yea buy and eat; buy wine,
“and milk, without money, and without
“price.”

O! the riches of divine grace, that has thus abundantly favoured and blessed us with the celestial dew, which is of the bounteous mercy of our Father that is in heaven, without money, and without price. We have no equivalent wherewith to return the infinite obligation; we have nothing to plead with; no claim to avail ourselves of, or depend upon, but upon him that sheweth mercy. We have no righteousness but of him; no strength but in his strength; neither might, nor wisdom, but of him: let him that glorieth, therefore, glory in this, that he that sheweth mercy hath imparted ability to perform the duties required at his hands.

For

For there is no equivalent, or return of gratitude whereby to attribute a sufficiency of thankful reverence, for the glorious benefits we receive in the light of his countenance; we have no adequate strength of our own, but in the diffusion of abilitating virtue from the Son of God. Some people would avail themselves of knowledge, and the strength of opinion, without a lively possession of “that faith that works by love,” to “the purifying of the heart.” It will cast out every claim to merit, or of sufficiency, but what proceeds from Him, by whom are all things, and we by him.

“Wherefore spend ye your money for
“that which is not bread, and your labour
“for that which satisfieth not?” Here let us a little inquire into the state and progress of such disposed minds, as are negligently spending their money “for that which is
“not bread, and their labour for that which
“satisfieth not.”

What is the reason that the convinced of God, are not so generally converted as might be? It is because they apprehend themselves converted and healed, too frequently, in a state of unsoundness; these grow not up
in

in divine knowledge and understanding of spiritual things ; but from being confirmed in a holy fortitude, are led to pursue the uncertain mazes of folly, by “ spending their
“ money for that which is not bread,
“ and their labour for that which satisfieth
“ not.”

I think the reason of it may be further thus understood ; it is for want of regarding this solemn injunction, “ Hearken diligently
“ unto me.” Alas ! too many, whose minds have been measurably awakened to a sense of good, are departing after other inventions, and not attending to instruction from him that speaks as never man spoke ; have departed from attentively listening to the voice that is perfect wisdom, into the vain admiration of man. “ Little children, keep yourselves from idols,” your minds once established in the unity of the holy Catholic church, have been broken into rents and schisms ; “ I am of Paul, I of Apollos, and I of Cephas.” I am of this man, I am of the other man ; I esteem such a one, and I follow the doctrine of such a teacher ; and here the seamless garment of the holy Jesus has been rent, and schisms have been introduced

duced by apostacy and seduction from the Great “Shepherd, and everlasting Bishop of souls;” who speaks as never man spoke. These are involved in the paths of amusement; and are neglecting their heavenly teacher that speaks as never man spoke, by continuing their dependence upon human aid, and idolizing this man, or the other man; this has been a means wherewith the enemy of Christianity hath sought to deface the beauty of the primitive churches: and the same temptation is succeeding in our day. “I am of Paul, I of Apollos, and I of “Cephas;” and have not we those distinctions, literally, in these days in which we live?

But I believe there are many whose minds, by the animating virtue of divine life, are brought to bear part in that universal groan and labour of all creation, which the apostle speaks of; and which is in measure alive in our days, not to be unclothed, but to be “clothed upon with a house from heaven:” who are hearkening to him, following after him, the “Shepherd and Bishop of souls;” who endeavour to live in the obedience of faith, and not in the splendour of empty profession,

profession, but in the possession of that heavenly virtue, which furnishes unto every good word and work.

There are some who, unable to sustain the Christian doctrine, are transferring it from one to another; these would gladly continue in the gratification of sense, in the hopes they can transfer it from themselves, and fix it on another. These make an ample profession of religion, of the shadowy performances of religion, or external duty; they have fallen asleep within mysterious Babylon, and think themselves secure from that penetrating holy eye that views the secrets of every heart.

“What meanest thou, O sleeper? Arise
“and call upon thy God.” A language of this kind has been spoken by the great and heavenly preacher, that searches the deep things of God, and discovers the mysteries of iniquity, which with all the appendages of mystery Babylon, are open to its view.
“What meanest thou, O sleeper? Arise,
“and call upon thy God.” This awakening voice produced in the rebellious prophet a consciousness of sin; it put him upon acknowledging that he was the cause of their distress.

distress. But hast thou not got asleep again, and dreamed a dream of unfelt truths; fallen fast asleep in a profession of religion, a vocal acknowledgment, the labour of the tongue with an unsanctified heart. These are in imminent danger of continuing in the disregard of practical animated religion, which would engage the soul, in humble reverence, to approach the Father of Spirits with the acceptable sacrifice of mental adoration and praise.

“Why spend ye your money for that
“which is not bread, and your labour for
“that which satisfieth not.”

Be convinced of the heavenly efficacy of divine grace, and ever retain a precious sense of its virtue upon the soul. Why are ye scattered abroad in the amusements of the flesh? Why is the work become abortive, and the labours of the day obstructed? It is for want of a necessary attention. “Hearken diligently unto me,” is the universal call of God; and not to any subordinate teacher, who may be as a delegated servant or shepherd of the flock. These are but men, subject to like passions with you; equally liable with you to the snares, difficulties,
and

and jeopardies of their race; surrounded with the same dangers with you to whom they minister, and too frequently are found to be such as are engaged in the pursuit of temporal interest, more than for the good of souls. They consider not their contradictory doctrines; but puzzle the mind with unintelligible fruits of studious labour, and that too often at the price of the Christian faith. For though in part some have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, they nevertheless continue involved in all the deceivableness of unrighteousness. But our merciful Father has provided a safer dependence; for as flesh hath the principles of life, so the animating virtue of divine life is imparted from the Son of God, the Saviour of the world, immediately through the influence of his Holy Spirit; wherein is revealed all that is necessary for us to know. This is, as I conceive, the one important object of all our reverence, adoration, and praise.

“Wherefore spend ye your money for
“that which is not bread, and your labour
“for that which satisfieth not? Hearken
“diligently unto me, and eat ye that which

“ is good, and let your soul delight itself in
“ fatness.”

Alas ! how many are there who might have been far advanced on their way to Mount Sion, the holy habitation of the saints’ solemnity, nearer that celestial city, “ whose walls are salvation, and whose gates
“ are praise ;” who might have been sustained by the power of his might, but who now are in a feeble state, and incapacitated for proceeding in an arduous advance towards eternal glory. They are turning back again, and are lost in the fields of imagination, in matters remote from their eternal interest ; but might have become shareers of celestial wisdom, and have been admitted to tread in the courts of his holiness.

“ Hearken diligently unto me,” says the Eternal Word, that was before words, and will be when all language shall cease.
“ Hearken diligently unto me ;” for I have
“ laid Judgment to the line, and Righteousness to the plummet.” He will remove the old man with all his goods, and disturb the strong man armed with a gilded profession of the Christian name, and at the same time
not

not possessed of its powerful, heavenly efficacy upon the soul.

“Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye
“that which is good.”

O! that the attention of mankind might be more solicitously engaged in the pursuit of that which is good; after the glorious benefits of the Christian faith: not with the false traffic of unfelt truths, but in the demonstration of the Spirit and with power, may you advance from grace to grace, and from one degree of strength to another; until your dependence be fixed upon Him, that fills the clouds and empties them at his pleasure.

We never shall be established as pillars in the house of God, never come up in the nobility and dignity with which he ornaments his family, until we shall have got beyond the superficial beauties of a name, and be engaged in the pursuit of substantial good, in ardent pursuit after divine life. “The
“watchmen that go about the city found
“me; to whom I said, Saw ye him whom my
“soul loveth? It was but a little that I passed
“from them, but I found him whom my soul
“loveth;” and if we find him not, we are
found

found of him; clothed with wisdom, and with the stability of knowledge.

Continue this dependent watching state; dependent and watchful upon him in whom are hid the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; who is not variable like man, but seeks the good of the soul by means of his own Spirit: not fallible like man, for unchangeable and everlasting are the attributes of wisdom and goodness. Hear then his gracious invitation; “Ho! every one
“that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and
“let him that hath no money come; yea,
“buy and eat; yea come, buy wine and
“milk without money and without price.
“Wherefore do ye spend money for that
“which is not bread, and your labour for
“that which satisfieth not? Incline your
“ear, hearken diligently unto me, and eat
“ye that which is good, and let your soul
“delight itself in fatness.”

This was the language of divine wisdom, and remains to be so; and I know it is the language of that power that hath visited many in the days of their distress.

In the time of their youth, when raised up by a measure of divine approbation sealed
on

on their minds, they were early admitted to an acquaintance with the God that made them; and they went forth in the simplicity of the gospel, to direct to the Spirit of Christ, the light and life of man. They dared not preach other than the truth; than that which they had known from the beginning, in the experience of divine aid, and by the assistance of the Holy Spirit. They were induced to lay aside all hireling teachers; and to obstruct the endeavours of such as make merchandize of the word of God. Where this doctrine prevailed, it revived a dependence upon HIM alone; not upon external acts, but in attentive obedience to our universal Parent, an hearkening diligently to the call of God. “Eat that which is good, and let thy soul delight itself in fatness.”

May this be the happy attainment of your experience; that your minds may be fruitful in thus labouring to hear the voice that speaks “as never man spoke.” It speaks home to thy state, and will be with thee when no eye is near. It will tell thee all that ever thou hast done; sees through the false glosses put upon acts, and is a distin-

guisher of the precious from the vile ; it is a voice of approbation to the thirsty soul ; a voice behind thee, saying, “ This is the “ way, walk in it.”

“ Little children, keep yourselves from “ idols.” It is the holy Jesus that commands our belief. There are many in whom has been raised a divine thirst after essential good, and whom the Lord of all power would graciously satisfy with the good things of eternal life, but who are not willing to come under the chastening of his hand.

When the idolized objects of sense, or any appearance whatsoever amongst the sons of men, has obstructed the manifestation of their morning light, there is a continued defection, both in principle and practice, from the spiritual doctrine of faith. I am of such a one, I am of this, or the other persuasion ; and thus are they professing godliness, without the wisdom and power of God.

The Author of divine wisdom has imparted an increase of strength to all who trust in him, and faithfully depend upon him ; but his curse is gone forth against the obdurate, impenitent soul : and if God hath cursed, who shall bless ? Therefore “ Keep “ yourselves

“ yourselves from idols ; ” live to hear him that is able to preserve you. “ Harken “ diligently unto me, eat ye that which is “ good, and let your soul delight itself in “ fatness,” is what I wish for with that ardour that covers my spirit, for your welfare, the increase of righteousness, and the promotion of Christian knowledge. For I have no doubt but he would still beautify the place of his footstool ; and as this becomes the case, you would grow up in beautiful uniformity, adorning the gospel of God, the Saviour of the world, in the midst of the paths of wisdom and truth ; and thus proceed “ in the beauty of holiness, and in “ newness of life.”

“ Add to your faith virtue ; and to “ virtue knowledge ; and to knowledge “ temperance : ” these would have become joined together, but that some have broken this chain, by adding to their faith, self-confidence, and unto knowledge, pride that has puffed them up because of their knowledge. For though it may extend from “ the hyssop upon the wall to the cedars “ of Lebanon,” it may yet be the work of an unsanctified heart : thus many are

grown great in religious knowledge, and in religious matters, and apprehend themselves possessed of abundant good ; but at the same time are become as the “ hinds and the roes “ of the field ;” they have not added temperance to their knowledge ; not sufficiently observed the beautiful connection there is between these two pillars and the respective places they bear in that holy beautiful house of Christianity, wherein are these seven capital pillars, distinguished by the apostle, “ Add to your faith virtue, and “ to virtue knowledge ; and to knowledge “ temperance ; and to temperance patience ; “ and to patience godliness ; and to godli- “ ness brotherly-kindness, and to brotherly- “ kindness charity. For if these things be “ in you, and abound, they make you “ neither barren nor unfruitful,” but fruitful in all things, through the Christian knowledge. May this be the glorious attainment of each within the audience of my voice, that have received a measure of divine grace, and is brought to partake of the heavenly gift ; “ that your soul may delight “ itself in fatness,” and finally obtain an inheritance

inheritance in the world to come, and in the eternal fruition of ineffable joys.

May you, my brethren and sisters in profession, with ardour endeavour to lay hold of substantial good: you live amongst an inquiring people, who are asking the way to Sion, the city of the living God; and they want that instruction, that might properly influence their lives and conduct. The people are desirous after good; their expectations lean towards an enduring hope. You have been abundantly favoured with the visitation of heavenly regard; and in the fruition of exceeding joy, have often had to sing of his mercies, and pronounce the wonders of his might.

Alas! it is a want of charity that wounds the cause of our profession; a walking contrary to the established principles has often made heavy work amongst us, as a Christian society, as well as an over assiduous engagement in the apostatized spirit of the world, in its licentious pursuits, or an inordinate love of its pleasures; in which too many are involved. But I trust there is a time at hand, when he will make his “angels spirits, “and his ministers a flame of fire;” when

we may be distinguished by a more zealous activity in the cause of truth, more concern for the promotion of the cause of God : that through divine power many may have to say, “ follow us as we follow Christ.” May we thus, as ardent watchmen, sustain the duties of our day ; may we steadily advance in the enlargement of divine experience, and as lifted up in eminence of virtue, may we be qualified to answer the inquiring soul, “ Come up hither, and I will shew thee the “ bride, the Lamb’s wife.” This my brethren and sisters, is what I wish for, in order that when the “ Great Shepherd shall appear, you may also appear with him in “ glory.” May we be enabled so to adorn the gospel of God, that we may become as a “ city set upon a hill,” conspicuous in its glorious appearance among mankind.

But the practice of too many has not been equal to their knowledge ; they have grown great and high in religious matters, and at the same time destitute of its virtues, or that holiness and purity religion calls for. Very lamentable is the condition of such ; but be ye established in the gospel of godliness ; “ gird up the loins of your minds ; be sober
“ and

“and hope to the end.” Let the youth amongst us blow the trumpet to those who have wandered in “deserts, and in mountains, and in dens, and in caves of the earth;” may this be the engagement of the rising generation; for great is the cause of God and his truth. And it is under a sense of our heavenly Father’s love, that I wish the enlargement of wisdom, and the increase of divine experience amongst us as a people, as well as among all societies; and that the kingdoms of the earth may become the kingdom of the holy Jesus; established in righteousness and peace for ever.

Suffer me to conclude with an affectionate address to you the rising youth.

Happy would it be, if a constant solicitude after the good things of eternal life, was more prevalent in your minds. Would you dip your foot in oil? Would you inherit eternal happiness? Would you be the joy of the present generation, and the staff of the next? Would you shine as the morning star, and unite with the sons that shout for joy? “Hearken diligently;” attentively hearken to the voice of your Creator; “Eat ye that which is good, and let your soul
B 6 “delight

“ delight itself in fatness: ” wait upon that power that would prepare, and redeem you from evil; that leavening virtue, the measure of divine grace, which will leaven into its own nature and similitude, in the image of him that made you, wherein you are joined as members in his sanctified church and family.

Remember that upon you must shortly devolve a cause, greater than the cause of empires and of kingdoms, or the general state of mankind; that you are to act for God upon earth; to shew forth his praise; and as you increase in years, to mingle with the elder brethren, and consistently with the office of the militant church, to make war in righteousness against the powers of darkness.

May you steadily run, so as to obtain the cup of life and salvation, by an uniform advance in the purity of faith; may you finally be received into endless glory.

A PRAYER,

Delivered after the foregoing Discourse

By SAMUEL FOTHERGILL.



THINE holy eye beholds the solemn and awful reverence in which our spirits bow before thee, O ! Father of infinite mercy and goodness, in which thou art pleased to regard the workmanship of thy hand ; and from day to day, and oftener than the day, to fill the clouds with showers of celestial blessings ; and to visit, in every sure mercy, the various states and conditions of thy children, and of all such as look towards thee from the ends of the earth.

Most gracious and adorable fountain of mercy ! we humbly beseech thee, in the name and in the spirit of thy dear Son, to write instruction upon all our minds : give us to ponder the excellency of thy loving kindness ; endue our minds with solemn gratitude to thee for all these thy mercies, and assist

us to continue in filial dependence upon thee. Bring us home thus, O! Lord, into a divine connexion with the workmanship of thy holy hand, and to the place where prayer, supplication, and giving of thanks, are wont to be made.

Bless the profession of truth,—the Christian religion, yet in a more general manner: with the knowledge of its truth, humble the hearts of the people in their various states and conditions of mind; draw them “into that which is within the veil;” arise in the majesty of thy glorious power, and shake both heaven and earth, and all the subordinate glories of opinion, all the beauties and excellencies of speculation. “Open the door of Lebanon, that the fire may devour her cedars;” that all the might of opinion, the superficial effects of unfelt truths may more and more become removed; and the soul be gathered to that which is substantial, to a dependance upon Thee, who speakest “as never man spoke.” Gather us, and we shall be gathered to Thee, the teacher of Israel, who sleepest not by day, nor slumberest by night. Collect us, we pray thee, to thy word of life and spirit; may it descend as dew,

dew, and celestial doctrine as tender rain ; and make fruitful to thy praise, and the enlargement of our experience and knowledge of thy blessed truth, and our humility and reverent walking before thee.

May it please thee, O God of life, more and more to arise and spread the virtue of thy life upon the minds of the people ; and in a peculiar manner upon those who have measurably known the day star of thy righteousness to arise in their minds, and yet have wandered in the paths of imagination ; that have measurably begun in the spirit, and want to be made perfect in the flesh. But, O ! Lord God of power, arise in the excellency of thy might, and scatter thine enemies, that they may come up before thee in the “ beauty of holiness and newness of life,” in amiable circumspection as obedient children, ornamented and clothed with the spirit of righteousness. That thou mayest yet bring up the church as out of the wilderness, and that many may have to see thy glory and to rejoice in it.

Thus, O “ Father which art in heaven,” enable us, with the united sacrifice of thanksgiving, to render thee the praise that is
ever

ever due, to hallow thy great and excellent name in the acceptable oblation of humble worship to thee our God, and in the view of unspeakable mercy, to intreat, that “thy will
“may be done in earth as it is in heaven;
“give us this day our daily bread;” the sustaining virtue of thy life diffused in every heart. Let it be the bread of correction, that we may “kiss the rod” of thy hand, and rejoice with trembling; beseeching thee to “forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive
“them that trespass against us.” Let them be blotted out of the book of remembrance: dress thou our garden, and keep it within the sacred inclosure of thy righteousness, which is everlasting life and salvation.

Be with us in every exercise in this state of probation; help us along by thy heavenly aid. Clothe thy people with thy salvation. Be the desire of the nations, the peculiar glory of thy people: that, lifted up with reverential fear, we may offer a portion of holy humble worship. It is to Thee, who makest “the clouds thy chariot, and that
“walkest upon the wings of the wind;” it is to Thee, whose name we cannot speak: whose praise angels cannot sufficiently celebrate;

brate ; it is to Thee, whom none can comprehend, O glorious BEING, that we lift up our hearts with our hands in the solemn act of humble worship ; intreating, that with the voice of thanksgiving, we may acceptably speak of thy mercy, and ascribe to Thee the praise ; for “ thine is the kingdom, the power “ and the glory, for ever more. Amen.”

A
DISCOURSE

BY THE LATE

SAMUEL FOTHERGILL. X

THERE is a passage of sacred writ, which has been revived in my remembrance during the silence of this meeting, and the train of reflections which it excited, has sealed instruction to my mind, and furnished me with renewed cause of humiliation and gratitude. “Men and brethren what shall we do to be saved?”

Every person who seriously believes in the existence of a God, in a future state, and in the awful doctrine of rewards and punishments, cannot be indifferent respecting what may be his lot when he shall be dispossessed of this frail tabernacle of clay which he now inhabits, and which is approaching to the
period

period of its dissolution. It cannot be a matter of indifference to him, whether he shall finally receive the irrevocable sentence of ‘Go, ye cursed, into the regions of ‘irremediable misery;’ or, ‘come ye ‘blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom ‘prepared for the righteous; enter thou ‘into the joy of thy Lord, and into thy ‘Master’s rest.’ This concern has prompted many to inquire what is essentially necessary for them to believe and practice, in order to render themselves proper objects of divine complacency, and to furnish them with a well-grounded hope of a glorious and happy immortality.

Many of the honest and sincere of every nation under heaven, have formed different ideas of the requisites for salvation; and, of course, have pursued different measures to accomplish that desirable end.

It is not my present business to particularize any of those various systems of faith which are adopted by any party amongst mankind. It is not to controvert matters, in which sincere men of the various denominations most surely believe; but rather to recommend them always to stand open to conviction,

conviction, and to recommend a strict attention to those rules of conduct which appear to them most agreeable to the will of heaven.

I shall therefore address myself to those, in whatever religious society they are found, whose honest inquiries have not yet been attended with sufficient conviction; have not led them clearly to perceive what are the terms on which their future happiness depends; and are therefore looking one upon another, whilst this important question is found, at least, in their hearts, if not in their mouths, “Men and brethren, what shall we do to be saved?”

I shall not presume arrogantly to dictate to any respecting matters of so important a concern as that of the salvation of the soul: every man should exercise those talents with which the Father of Light hath endowed him, in a close and sincere attention to the voice of the internal teacher; and in the discovery of those truths, both practical and speculative, which have an immediate relation to the happiness of a being, circumstanced as he is.

I shall simply propose those things which,
from

from my own experience as an individual, appear to me worthy of God for their author; and worthy of man's most serious attention. It is an indisputable truth that we made not ourselves; we may safely join in the prophet's appeal to God, "We are
" thine offspring, *Thou* hast made us, and
" not we ourselves."

The matter which forms the universe, the vehicles which the soul informs, and the intellectual powers and faculties we possess, derived their being from the eternal fountain of all power and intelligence; whom we characterize by the awful names of Jehovah and God.

It is also clear to me, that we were brought into existence with the benevolent design of finally sustaining the confluent dignities of glory, honour, immortality, and eternal life. The Lord Almighty hath in unspeakable mercy designed, that after we have endured a season of probation on earth, a conflict with our passions excited by various causes, and a fight of afflictions, we should finally receive a glorious reward; a perpetuity of unmixed felicity, in the unknown regions of eternity. But this desirable end is **not** to be effected

effected by what is generally called Fate, the laws of necessity, or the arbitrary will and power of the Author of our existence. God has constituted us free and intelligent beings, and endued us with faculties capable of apprehending and practising those duties, which he makes the conditions of our final acceptance with him. He offers, but does not impose, happiness on his creatures; he shews us the spiritual Canaan; he gives us power to possess it, but does not compel us to enter into it. Good and evil are clearly set before us, but our election is not constrained to either. The Sovereign of the universe is no respecter of persons;” for, “of one blood he made all nations that dwell on the face of the earth;” they stand in the same relation to the universal Father, Shepherd, and Bishop of souls, who tenderly invites the whole race of mankind to inherit the joy of his salvation. To this doctrine, the holy apostle bears an ample and explicit testimony; “Of a truth,” said he, “I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but of every nation, those who fear him and work righteousness, shall be accepted of him.”

“ If

“ If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die :
“ but if ye, through the spirit, mortify the
“ deeds of the body, ye shall live.”

This is a proposition that relates to every individual in the vast community of mankind, however circumstanced ; whether bond or free, or in whatever climate he resides. All this indeed may be acknowledged, both by those within and without the audience of my voice, who yet are in doubt what they shall do to be saved with an everlasting salvation. They want to be informed of the precise ideas that should be affixed to the conditions contained in the text, though perhaps they readily apprehend that the terms life and death imply future happiness and misery. I shall therefore attempt, according to the ability I am endued with, to give you my thoughts on the important subject at this time. To “ live after the flesh,” is to live in the gratification of our animal appetites and passions, beyond the bounds of reason, temperance, and sobriety : which, as it frequently introduces numerous disorders into the animal system, and aggravates those infirmities to which these corruptible bodies are incident ; so it affects the good of society,
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and renders us unfit for those contemplations, and that felicity, which is adapted to the dignity of rational and immortal spirits; beings, whom God in his wisdom has made a little (and perhaps but a little) lower than the angels, and would crown with a glory, honor, and happiness, far superior to that which animal gratifications confer on their deluded votaries.

Whilst we are in the body, we must expect to find those appetites, affections, and pursuits, which belong to our nature: but these are to be restricted within the bounds of virtue, and attended to in proportion to our exigencies and necessities; of which the divine principle that God has graciously implanted in our hearts ought to judge. This principle of intelligence, although called by a variety of names, is invariably the same throughout all mankind. It is the spirit in man, that giveth a right understanding: it is the light that more or less enlightens every man: it is the word of God in the heart: the word of faith which the apostle preached to the gentiles: it is the grace that hath appeared to all men, teaching them to deny ungodliness and the world's lusts; and to live soberly,

soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world. Finally, it is the supreme reason, the law of truth and rectitude, the test of virtue and vice, which God himself hath erected in the hearts of all men; and happy are those who hear and obey it in all things.

I would not be understood to mean, that this principle of which I am speaking is designed to instruct us in all those truths which the human mind may attempt to investigate; or to give a clear insight into those numerous, speculative subjects, which have not only unprofitably employed mankind, and diverted their attention from more substantial objects, but which have perplexed and divided them from generation to generation. But by the exercise of it we may apprehend those truths that belong to us, and have an essential relation to the important end of our existence, and be enabled to form a just judgment of their force and extent; this is plainly implied in that question which our Lord himself proposed to a people misled by the traditions of their fathers; “Yea, and why even
“ of yourselves judge ye not what is right?”

Various are our obligations and duties, religious, relative and social; arising from

our various connections, natural and divine. The relation we stand in to the Author of our being is, that of children; filial fear, obedience, and worship, are therefore our indispensable duties to him, throughout our whole lives in our conduct at all times. The relation we stand in to our fellow creatures is, that of brethren; children of the same universal Father, and formed for the same glorious and happy end. Justice, charity, and brotherly kindness are therefore our indispensable obligations to mankind. There are also various accidental relations, such as father, governor, master, servant, and numerous others, all which have their correspondent duties. Thus far, perhaps, the persons whom I immediately address at this time, may concur with me in sentiment; but they, as well as I, are perhaps conscious of having failed, in numerous instances, of discharging their religious duties to God, and their social duties to mankind. “We have
“all sinned, and fallen short of the glory of God:” we have multiplied our transgressions without number, and our iniquities rise before us as a thick cloud, which obscures the brightness of that eternal^{*} sun of righteousness,

ness, that would otherwise illuminate our understandings with its marvellous light. “Who, therefore,” says the illuminated penitent soul, “who shall deliver us from the “body of this death:” who shall take from us the weight of our sins under which we incessantly groan: who shall save us from the wrath to come? “Men and brethren, “what shall we do to be saved?

The conditions of our reconciliation and redemption are very clearly expressed in the oracles of sacred truth; the placability of the divine nature is repeatedly asserted; he is represented to us in the adorable character of a God of mercy, long suffering, and of unspeakable kindness; as a Being ready to blot out our transgressions from the celestial register on our sincere repentance, and to remember them no more. This important and interesting doctrine was testified under the law, spoken of by the prophets, and gloriously asserted by the Son of God, who is our mediator with the Father, and the hope of our future glory; in his character was displayed to mankind, in the most eminent and striking manner, the provident care, mercy, and goodness of God toward the

whole rational creation ; who, like sheep, have gone astray from the universal Shepherd and Bishop of souls, and have widely wandered from the paths of purity and holiness, which are ways of pleasantness and peace. That path of the just man, which (like the luminous orb as it arises in our hemisphere) shines with increasing refulgency, splendor, and brightness, till it arrives at the meridian altitude of a glorious, perfect day ; this path leads all those who pursue its direction by degrees of experience, through the wilderness of this world to the grand and ultimate end of our creation ; to that complete fruition of bliss, which is figuratively represented to us by a “ city that hath foundations, “ whose builder and maker God is ; ” a city whose walls are salvation, and whose gates are eternal praise ; a city that hath no need of the elementary light of sun, moon, and stars, for the Lord God and the Lamb are the lights thereof ; a city where God reigns triumphantly amongst his saints, and is to them an inexhaustible fountain of light and felicity : there the weary pilgrim finds an end of all his anxiety and labour, and receives
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the reward of his faith, the fruition of his hope, even the salvation of his soul.

The important message which Christ had in commission from his Father, and our Father; his God, and our God; was, that he compassionated his creatures encompassed with the distresses which their sins had brought upon them; that he willed not their everlasting separation from him, the source of happiness; that he was willing they should be reconciled to him: he therefore calls upon them to "repent and be converted," that their sins might be forgiven them, and that they might finally enter into his rest. This was the interesting doctrine which the Saviour of man promulgated; and happy are those who hear and obey it. "Repent and be converted, that your sins may be forgiven." It is not the assent of the lip and of the tongue to the glorious truths of the gospel, but a surrender of the will and affections, a renovation of heart, and conformity to the divine image, which can alone gain us admission into the new Jerusalem, the city of God.

If we take an impartial survey of our past lives, review our frequent revoltings, and

compare our conduct with the convictions we have often received of right and wrong, virtue and vice ; there is scarcely a soul present but must feel some degree of remorse, some degree of repentance, for the turpitude of his morals and his want of love, obedience, and gratitude, to so gracious a Father, who has encompassed us with blessings by his providence from the earliest period of our lives to the present hour. We must, I say again, upon serious retrospection, possess some degree of repentance ; but unhappily for us, these profitable impressions are frequently not durable, they are too soon erased by a variety of creaturely objects, and pass away like the early dew. Those who have been cleansed in some degree by the water of contrition, are often defiled again by a repetition of that iniquity, which, in the moments of their humiliation, they had determined to renounce and forsake ; they are again caught in the snares of their lusts, and captivated by those objects which have a tendency to alienate their affections from the supreme Good. Thus, when the force of conviction again sounds the awakening alarm, they are ready to query, with surprize and anxiety,

anxiety, what is to be done in this afflictive dilemma, to which our inconstancy to virtuous resolutions has reduced us? Shall we despair of that divine mercy we have so often abused; of that goodness we have so long trifled with? God forbid! rather prostrate your souls at the throne of grace, and humbly implore the continued mercy of the universal Parent. “As a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him; for he knoweth our frame, he remembereth that we are dust.” Beseech him therefore to send forth help from his holy sanctuary; that you may be strengthened to renew and keep your covenants with him; refrain from the commission of evil, and wait on him in the silence of all flesh. Since it hath pleased him again to enlighten your darkness, and thus to give you to see yourselves as you are seen of him, he may also be pleased to inflame your hearts with that celestial fire which purgeth away the intellectual filth and dross, that prevents the ascent of the soul God-ward, and renders it an unfit habitation for his holiness to dwell in.

As our backslidings have frequently cor-
C 4 rected

rected us, and covered our minds with anxiety, let our future conduct, directed by his grace, atone for what is passed; and, by a conversation ordered aright, let us glorify our Father who is in heaven.

I feel at this season the influence (in degree) of that celestial charity which breathes through Immanuel to the whole creation of God, and wishes salvation to every soul that inhabits the earth; in which I entreat you, as a being subject to the same infirmities that you sometimes unavailingly deplore, “repent and be converted.” Repentance you have frequently experienced; but too little, I fear, of that essential conversion which the gospel of Jesus proposes. It is highly probable that some persons present have seen the necessity of that renovation of heart and reformation of manners, intended by conversion; yet, urged by the powerful prevalence of their lusts, would, if possible, find some other remedy for a wounded conscience, than that which the simplicity of the gospel requires, as a necessary prelude to the favor of God. Like the rich young man in the gospel, they have been animated with a desire to be enrolled amongst the disciples of Jesus;

Jesus ; who are called heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, of that inheritance which is incorruptible and full of glory. They have asked counsel of the wonderful Counsellor ; addressing him with this important question, “ What good thing shall I do, that I may “ inherit eternal life ? ” Yet when the unchangeable terms of salvation have been proposed ; when they have been told that they must part with all their idols, they have gone away sorrowful : the terms have appeared too hard for them to comply with, and like the Assyrian that wanted to be cured of his leprosy, and was staggered at the thoughts of taking so long a journey as the prophet directed, are crying out, “ Are “ not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damas- “ cus, better than all the waters of Israel ? “ may not I wash in them and be clean ? ” Thus, numbers amongst mankind are striving to elude those measures which the gospel of Jesus enjoins ; and are substituting others in their stead, which are better adapted to sooth the carnal mind, and prevent that mortification of the deeds of the body, which human nature shrinks from.

Man is desirous to possess the crown of

eternal life, but not to bear the cross; he would indeed reign with Christ, but not suffer with him; he would accompany him to the Mount of Transfiguration, but not to Golgotha; he would be his attendant at his glorification, but not in the awful scenes of his humiliation. Divers have wandered as from mountain to mountain, and from hill to hill, seeking for the living in the sepulchres of the dead; they have sometimes adopted one creed and sometimes another, practised external ordinances and complied with empty forms, addressing themselves frequently to guides, as weak and impotent as themselves, with this important inquiry, “Men and brethren what shall we do to be saved?” I say again, “Repent and be converted;” for this is the only way to find salvation to your souls. No external ceremonies, no verbal confessions, nor any change of opinions merely, can accomplish this repentance and conversion, and afford you the consequent reward of a glorious immortality.

This important work of salvation must be effected in man by the powerful operation of the Holy Ghost; which is as a consuming
fire

fire to the adverse part in man, to the corrupt and perverse will, which would not that Christ should reign in his kingdom, and that God should be all in all. It is the baptism of fire, of which John's was but a type, which, discriminating the pure from the impure, gathers the wheat into the garner, but consumes the chaff with unquenchable burnings.

In the world, there are many voices which correspond not with the voice of Christ, the only true Shepherd (whom we ought to hear and obey in all things), but are the voices of them that preach for hire, and divine for money; who look for their gain from their labours, and are ready to make war upon such as cannot conscientiously support them. These have found it for their worldly interest to lead people from, rather than to, Christ, the glorious high priest of the Christian religion; they have attempted to render that mysterious, which the Holy Ghost hath left plain; and to perplex the understandings of mankind with vain metaphysical speculations, without making them either wiser or better. This class of men

have indeed proved physicians of no real value: instead of laying the axe to the root of the corrupt tree, they have only attempted to lop off some of its branches; they have prescribed emolients where the most searching operations were expedient: and thus, healing the wound of the daughter of Zion deceitfully, they have lulled multitudes into a fatal security, flattering them with hopes which must finally end in disappointment.

There are others who assume the office of ministers, the purity of whose intentions my charity will not permit me to dispute; who, like a man that attempts to answer a question before he has fully heard it, have too precipitately embarked in the important work of instructing souls relative to the affairs of salvation. These are like Ephraim, “a
“cake not turned;” are not yet instructed in the way of the Lord perfectly; and whilst they are teaching others, had need themselves to be taught what are “the first principles of the oracles of God.” They have run on the Lord’s errand unsent, and therefore have not essentially profited the people. They have taken upon them
to

to guide those that are inquiring what they shall do to be saved, and have led them indeed from the confines of Egypt; but leave them (undirected to the spiritual Moses) to wander in uncertainty, and to compass a mountain of doubts in the wilderness. May the Lord Almighty, in his mercy, gather those who are wandering as sheep without a shepherd, and lead them into the sacred inclosure of his fold, into eternal safety.

Let it not be thought, from any thing I have said, that I look upon all those who are girded with the linen ephod of other Christian societies, either as impostors, or the deluded votaries of antichrist. I freely declare, that I doubt not but many of them have had a dispensation of the gospel committed to them; and although they may be biased by the prejudice of education, and the traditions of their fathers, yet the root of the matter seems to be in them: and I esteem those in whatever society they are to be found, or in whatever vestments they are clothed, as my brethren in the fellowship of the everlasting gospel of Christ. Yet I cannot direct the searcher after truth, who is pensively inquiring what he shall do to be saved, to the ministry of
any

any man ; but would rather recommend him to the immediate teaching of the word nigh in the heart, even the Spirit of God. This is the only infallible teacher, and primary adequate rule of faith and practice : it will lead those who attend to its dictates into the peaceable paths of safety and of truth. “ Ye need not,” said the apostle to the church formerly, “ that any man teach you, save as this anointing teacheth, which is truth and no lie : cease therefore from man, whose breath is in his nostrils,” and whose existence is but a vapour : for wherein is he to be accounted a fallible being ; he is liable to frequent deceptions, and therefore liable to deceive ; whereas the Spirit of God cannot be deceived, neither will it deceive any soul that yields itself to its government, and obeys its dictates. Oh, ye penitent prodigals, my soul earnestly longs for your restoration to the mercy and favour of God : ye who are reduced, by your wanderings in the wilderness of this world, to a state of extreme poverty ; to the want of that bread that came down from the celestial regions, which alone can nourish the soul up to eternal life. Ye who are attempting to satisfy the
cravings

cravings of an immortal spirit, with the spiritless husks and shells of an empty profession of religion ; look towards your Father from whom you have revolted : remember that in his house there is bread enough and to spare ; there your souls may be replenished with ever enduring substance. Return, O ! house of Israel ! seek the face of your everlasting Friend and Father ; he has, in unspeakable kindness, declared, that he will be found of those who seek him in sincerity of heart ; and that as many as knock at the gate of mercy, shall be admitted to his presence, and receive the remission of their sins. The humble address which the prodigal made to his father, in that excellent parable given us by our Lord himself, the father's reply to it, and the manner of his reception into favour, are exceedingly expressive of the becoming penitence of the one, and the mercy of the other. “ I have sinned against
“ heaven and in thy sight, and am no more
“ worthy to be called thy son ; make me
“ as one of thy hired servants.” The injured parent compassionates his distress, takes the prodigal in his arms, owns him for his son, orders the fatted calf to be
killed,

killed, and rebukes the envy of his elder brother with "This my son was dead and "is alive again, he was lost and is found." O! the height and depth of the goodness and mercy of God. "Look unto him all "ye ends of the earth, and be ye saved."

Before I conclude, I find it in my heart to address another class in this meeting; a class which have earnestly sought, and happily found, *him*, of whom "Moses and the prophets did write," Jesus of Nazareth, the Emmanuel; which, being interpreted, is, "God with us." Ye who once were scattered as sheep without a shepherd, "on the barren "mountains and desolate hills of an empty "profession;" but now the great Shepherd hath gathered you within the sacred inclosure of his sheepfold, and you are under the peculiar protection of the Lord Almighty. You hath he plucked as brands out of the burning, and redeemed to himself with the saving strength of his right arm; may you ever remember his unutterable mercy, and dedicate the remaining moments of life to the honour of his name.

My soul salutes you in the endeared affection of the gospel of peace, and wishes your establishment in righteousness; that you
may

may abide in holy patience the fiery trial of your faith, throughout the days of your pilgrimage on earth; and become as fixed pillars in the celestial building, the house of God, that shall no more go out.

If ye abide in the word of faith by which ye have been taught, neither the malice of men nor devils, nor all the united powers of darkness, shall be able to pluck you out of the hand of him who is your Judge, your King, your Protector, your Father, and your everlasting Friend. When the earth shall be wrapped together like a scroll; when the sun and moon shall be darkened; when every constellation of the heavens shall sink into everlasting obscurity, and the elements of this world shall melt with fervent heat; *you* will possess an habitation within the superior regions of a new heaven and a new earth, where the Lord your righteousness dwells.

Many of the pretended wise, learned, and prudent, who have sought to climb up some other way, rather than enter by Christ, who is the door (by the conditions which he has proposed) into the sheepfold, may pity you as fools, or ridicule you as enthusiasts; count
your

your lives madness, and your end to be without honour; but they will one day be astonished at the strangeness of your salvation, when they may see, to their confusion, that you are finally numbered amongst the children of God, and that the lot of your inheritance is amongst the saints.

In the world, you are to expect tribulations of various kinds; pain, sickness, temptations, and disappointments, invade the breast of the most righteous and temperate amongst men; the cup of mixture more or less impregnated with the wormwood and the gall, is the lot of all men, designed doubtless, to effect valuable purposes by him, who afflicts not willingly, nor without a righteous and benevolent cause, the children of men.

As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are the ways of Almighty wisdom higher than our ways; and his thoughts than our thoughts. We see a little, and but a very little, of the amazing universal plan of his government, over rational and immortal spirits. It is beyond the reach of the most exalted human faculties to comprehend his wisdom, throughout the righteous administration.

stration of his Providence, which is unsearchable: it is our duty, as frail dependent beings, to meet every dispensation of his Providence, with that resignation of spirit which incessantly breathes the humble language of "Not my will, O Lord! but thine" in all things be done."

Under the evils which we feel, and which our prudence could not prevent, let us rather implore divine aid to endure them with patience, than to pray that they might be moved from us; least, like ignorant children, we should seek to avoid that portion from our heavenly Father's hand, by which he graciously designed to prevent a greater evil.

This is not the place of your rest, but a state of probation, a painful pilgrimage through a land of pits and snares. *Narrow* is the path which leads to the regions of eternal peace.

The soul, by reason of its connexion with the body, inclosed within walls of flesh, cannot extend her views, or employ her faculties on divine objects, without frequent interruption. But when the days of her captivity are accomplished, her powers will
be

be capable of a more glorious expansion, and of bearing the inscription of holiness: she will then be put in full possession of that joy which is unspeakable and full of glory, in the kingdom of Immortality. Therefore, in all the calamities to which we are subject in the house of our pilgrimage, we have a place of refuge to flee to, where safety is alone to be found; though indeed we must feel in degree as *men*, yet we may possess the patience, resignation, and holy fortitude of *Christians*, who are looking for a better country; a more excellent inheritance in that city where “the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick.”

“Be ye steadfast, unmoveable: always abounding in the work of the Lord; forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.”

Be ye, in your several stations in the church and in the world, as way-marks to the honest inquirers, who are asking their way to Zion; and from a true sense of their condition, are crying out, “What shall we do to be saved?”

Shew forth by your example of charity, sobriety, temperance, and holiness of life,
that

that you are redeemed from the spirit of the world, that lies in wickedness; be not captivated by its trifling amusements, nor ensnared by its lying vanities, but retain the fear of God which will keep the heart clean; and prove a source of surest consolation, when all things else will be unavailing. Let the purity of your lives demonstrate, that your attention is fixed on things that are more excellent, that your affections are placed on things permanent and eternal; essentially relating to the salvation of the soul. By this means you will become the consecrated temples of the Holy Ghost, and be a means of leading others in the way of righteousness.

Finally, my brethren, farewell: I recommend you to God, the Shepherd of Israel, and to the word of his grace; as the infallible guide to instruct us in *what we shall do to be saved*. It is able to build us up in the most holy faith; to direct our feet in the way of righteousness and peace; and finally, to put us in possession of a glorious inheritance amongst the saints, that will never fade away.

A PRAYER

A PRAYER

*Delivered at the conclusion of a Meeting at
Leeds, 6th Month 26th, 1769.*

By SAMUEL FOTHERGILL.

THOU that searchest the heart, and knowest what is therein, most glorious Being! with reverence, and solemn praise we acknowledge thine infinite love; and with humility and awful worship, commemorate the gracious continuance of thy favour; which, in their respective services, appeareth in the minds of such of thy children and people, as, in the contemplation of thy goodness, are engaged to render the praise to thee alone.

In an humbling sense of thy continued regard, whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain, we prostrate our souls before thee. Although encompassed with the cherubim and seraphim, and infinitely exalted above all blessing and praise, yet dost thou extend thy providential care and assistance towards
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the meanest of thy family. We are engaged at this season to entreat thy continued care, that Zion may arise, and lift up her head to thee. In thine abundant regard, and tender compassion, thou art sustaining the poor and needy; and, with the glorious manifestations of thy love, art supporting the sick and sorrowful soul. Although centered on the eternal tribute of holy, holy, holy! and the hallelujahs of glorified spirits, yet thou art with the humble contrited mind, even in the habitations of sorrow and distress. To these, as well as to the glorious inhabitants of thy celestial kingdom, the fountain of life and salvation is opened and revealed, that the sons of men see, and be enabled to rejoice in thy glory! In an humble reverent sense of thy greatness, goodness, and mercy, we are encouraged to approach thee, and to bless thy great and excellent name!

We acknowledge thy kindness, and adorable condescension in thus supplying the various wants and necessities of thy people, who, under a grateful sense of thy unspeakable love, are engaged in the language of this solemn inquiry, What shall I render unto thee;

thee; or, wherewith shall I approach thee,
O Lord of heaven and earth!

We pray thee, in the name and in the spirit of thy dear Son, that an awful, humbling sense of thy goodness may spread over this assembly. Turn the minds of the multitude to thyself; and unite them in the fellowship and communion of saints. Thus, glorious Father, collect the attention of souls to thyself; that for thy mercies past, in the fruition of the present, and in the lively anticipation of their continuance through the succeeding steps of our lives, a cloud of incense may ascend with acceptance before thee, in the grateful oblation of thanksgiving and solemn praise!

And, O Lord God! thou who inhabitest the praises of eternity, and dwellest in the light, grant thy holy assistance, and prepare, we beseech thee, the minds of innumerable multitudes to receive thy truth: that thy church and kingdom may extend from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth.

Suffer not any to forget the time of looking upon thee, or to depart from their everlasting interest, by following after lying vanities.

Continue,

Continue, we pray thee, in thy mercy and goodness, the renewed visitation of thy love to the youth. They have been impressed with an holy sense of thine infinite regard: they have acknowledged thy goodness, and the glory of thy power; and yet they have too much turned aside from following thee.

Turn thine hand upon these, O Lord; enter into judgment with them; allure them into the wilderness, and give them vineyards from thence. Assert thy own right to their obedience, that they may happily be engaged to give up their minds to follow thee. Enable them to discharge their respective duties acceptably before thee; that through the redemption of thy power, they may become sanctified vessels with the sacred inscription of holiness upon them. Be near to them in poverty; enrich them with the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit, and be their safe hiding place in the day of adversity. Extend, we humbly beseech thee, thy compassionate care to the dust of Zion, that with unshaken confidence, fixed on the saving arm of thy power, they may steadily follow on in the way that leads to thy glorious kingdom.

When overtaken with anxiety and distress,

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and the waves of adversity pass over their heads, lift up O Lord, the light of thy countenance upon them: hide them, as under the shadow of thy wings, from the devourer; that the dust of thy Zion may yet arise, and shine forth in the beautiful garments of salvation and praise: that they may increase in the stability of wisdom, and knowledge; run with patience the race that is set before them, and persevere to a peaceful and happy conclusion in thy favour. Reach, we pray thee, the various states and conditions of those who are clad in the vestments of self-righteousness; involved in the mazes of vain opinions, or centered in empty and unprofitable forms.

Arise in the ministration of thy grace, which is a ministration of power, and shake all that can be shaken; in order that thy holy, eternal, unchangeable truth in Christ Jesus, may more and more spread and prevail in the earth; that the souls of many thousands may be gathered to thee, and know an entrance into everlasting life.

Thus gracious Father, whose goodness is infinite and power endless, bless the people we pray thee. Diffuse with increasing lustre
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the glories of thy name. Beautify the place of thy feet ; that the innumerable multitudes which thou hast formed may, with the voice of thanksgiving, look up to thee, “ our Father who art in heaven !” and in the sensible experience of thy mercy and truth, may hallow thy great and excellent name in newness of life ; and acknowledge that “ thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen !”

*Part of a Discourse delivered at Grace-
church-street Meeting, London.*

By S. FOTHERGILL.

CONSISTENT with the wisdom of the Holy Ghost, in the first ages of the church, was suggested a caution to those who had received the doctrine of the gospel, in language to this import; “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove yourselves; know ye not your ownelves, how that Jesus Christ is in you except ye be reprobates?”

If this caution was judged expedient in those which are deemed to have been the purest ages of the Christian church, when Jesus Christ, and him crucified, had been evidently set before the face of man; it should seem necessary in this remoter, and more distant period, to revive this caution; and

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to put each of us, in an individual capacity, upon attending with proper weight and diligence to a concern which, the expiration of a few fleeting transient moments will soon and unquestionably convince us, is a concern of everlasting importance.

As without faith it is impossible to please God, it behoves us all to examine, with an ardent solicitude, whether we are in the faith; and carefully to consider whether a persuasion of mind, that is merely opinion, has not passed upon us for that living, divine, substantial virtue. There is great reason to believe, without violation of charity, that a fatal mistake of this kind has been too prevalent; and if we examine rightly the different properties, the different obligations and effects of opinion, perhaps (nay it is beyond a perhaps) many amongst mankind may be found, who have rested in opinion, and have called it faith:—have rested in a persuasion of mind, but have not been in the faith. The faith of the church of Christ, the faith of God's elect, is, and leads to, victory.

This is a faith that overcomes the world; opinion is overcome by the world. Faith is triumphant in its power and in its effects; it

is of divine tendency to renew the heart, and to produce those fruits of purity and holiness which demonstrate the dignity of its original. Opinion has filled the world, enlarged the field of speculation, and been the cause of producing fruits directly opposite to the nature of faith. Opinion has terminated in schism; faith is productive of unity. A being baptized by the One Eternal Spirit, into the one living body whereof Christ is the head, is the blessed effect of that faith once delivered to the saints. Nevertheless the operation of faith may not be of that peculiar nature as to unite, in every circumstance, its various professors; for the operations of faith are various, and there is an increase and progressive advancement from faith to faith; yet that faith which works by love, to the purifying of the heart, speaks one language, produces one effect, leads to one end, and calls to all states and conditions of men in this divine language: “Ye shall be holy, “for I the Lord your God am holy.” This is the uniform unalterable language of that faith, which is not a vain unprofitable persuasion of mind of certain truths; so as to lean upon, and confide in them; to submit to them;

them ; and to be influenced by them in the various acts of life.

“ Examine yourselves,” all people, of all names, or professions of religion, whether “ ye be in the faith.” There are various opinions, there are various persuasions, by which mankind are distinguished one from another. We distinguish each other by *name*, but the righteous omniscient Judge distinguishes by nature. He, with whom we have to do, knows the state and condition of every individual ; his eye pierces through all deception ; his hand reaches through all distance ; and his balance, the balance of the sanctuary, tries the state of all minds, and discovers what is opinion, and what is faith. There have been, and still are, a variety of opinions concerning the plain, simple, truths of the Christian religion. But if mankind were blessed with hearts disposed to follow, as much as they are perplexed with heads disposed to dispute ; if there was a promptitude of heart to *deeds*, equal to the promptitude of head to speculation, all the contrary opinions, all the differing professions, all the disputes and contradictions that have subsisted among mankind, concerning the

one unchangeable way to eternal peace, would soon be at an end. They would find, if they were brought to a true faith in the proper object, that the whole of the Christian religion, stripped of the inventions and lusts of men, who have modelled all things to their own corrupt will, is comprized in a few plain, simple, significant truths. “ He
“ gave himself for us that he might redeem
“ us unto himself, a peculiar people, zealous
“ of good works.” I say, if people were disposed to receive the Christian religion, and to submit to its pure nature ; if they would attend to it in its beautiful simplicity, they need not propagate disputes, nor be at any loss for the manner of performing an acceptable worship. For to renew the heart, and to restore the soul, is the business of Christianity ; and Christianity is for ever equal to this glorious and desirable purpose. If this is not attained, the grand reason is, we have missed Christianity itself ; we have only rested in vain and unprofitable opinions concerning religion and religious things, which have not had that influence on our hearts, as to enable us to put off the old man with all his works, and to put on the new man Christ Jesus.

Without

Without this, whatever denomination men may be under, however specious their profession, all is imperfect and unprofitable. It is the power of an endless life, renewing and restoring the souls of men, and conforming them to the divine image, with heavenly affections rising from faith to faith, and from glory to glory, that is the saving religion of Jesus Christ the righteous. And inasmuch, therefore, as there is nothing else, throughout the whole extent of nature, that can form the soul of man to the divine and celestial image, or prepare it for the enjoyment of complete happiness with the Father, Son, and saints in light, but faith in Jesus Christ the righteous, it behoves us carefully to examine, not whether we are of this or that profession, but whether we are really in the faith; and have known him, who is the Author and glorious object of the saints faith throughout all generations: to examine, whether we believe in righteousness, not merely in the enlargement of notions and speculations, which consist in, and result from opinion; but whether we have a well-grounded faith that our hearts are guarded by that righteousness; for if we are not in

the faith, we are without the court where the face of the covering remains ; we are among the Gentiles, that are to be trodden under foot ; we are in the outward court of the temple, and in the empty, vain profession ; although we make a transition, and escape from some of those apartments that are defiled with obvious enormities. This may be the case with some from constitution ; for I believe there is a constitutional righteousness, as well as a constitutional opinion ; but they will both prove unavailing in the solemn work of the soul's salvation. I have seen some in the course of my remarks, who have been ready to bless themselves (with the Pharisee) that they were not of that prodigal, licentious disposition, observable in many others ; which tends to the ruin of body and soul, the misery of individuals, and the distress of families ; which in its nature is contrary to that faith that works by love, to the complete conformation of the heart to God. These have run into another extreme, and as they were taken up with the world, the world has taken up them ; and from too closely following the pursuit of riches, they are equally under the dominion of the enemy of all

all righteousness, and lodged in one of the various apartments of mystery Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots.

I cannot but repeat what I have before recommended ; which is, a diligent, impartial scrutiny into our own hearts : for some there are who dare not close their eyes to rest without reviewing the past actions of the day ; lest before the light of another morning they should be unalterably fixed for ever in the day of eternity !

Advice to a Young Couple.

By SAMUEL FOTHERGILL.

AS you are both young, and it is probable, very probable, may be at times solicitous for your future advancement in life, I would just propose one thing to your serious consideration, without which no one was ever happy, or any one unhappy with it; which is, Godliness: it is the soul's health. Godliness is profitable in all things; it is profitable in health, it is profitable in sickness, it is profitable upon a languishing bed, it is profitable in death, it initiates us into the company of glorified spirits, in the boundless and beatific regions of immortality. And, my dear young friends, I earnestly address you on this occasion, with a degree of the tenderest affection, sincerely desiring your happy introduction therein, when these few fleeting moments of your existence shall terminate, and
you

you shall be summoned from the stage of action, to appear before the tribunal of immaculate purity. You are placed here only as delegated stewards ; as accountable beings to your bountiful Creator for every talent committed to your care ; and your eternal interest depends on your consecrating them here to his service, who created you as vessels for his honour, and to whose guidance and protection, I warmly and affectionately recommend you, my beloved friends ; sincerely wishing your establishment and growth in the blessed and unchangeable truth, through the bounty and favour of our Father who is in heaven.

Godliness is profitable in all things, and I most earnestly intreat and recommend you to a due consideration of the importance of it : seek a friend in your early days that will never forsake you. For if you apply to him in sincerity, he will be found of you ; his divine goodness will preserve you as in the hollow of his hand, and conduct you through the various difficulties and dangers of a tempestuous world to an everlasting habitation in glory. Oh ! seek him early above every consideration ; he will be a father and a friend when no terrestrial objects can administer

minister the least consolation, and every pleasant picture shall be stained in your view. Godliness is profitable in all things ; it is the soul's health, it is the never fading support of the righteous under every difficulty, and the sovereign antidote to the evils of life. I could wish our dear youth were more generally engaged in pursuit after substantial happiness ; that they would cultivate an acquaintance with their Creator as in the morning of their day ; for the sands of life are hastening to a close, and the coming of death is approaching with unremitting swiftness.

Alas ! alas ! what are the riches and splendor of these perishing sublunary objects, in comparison of our everlasting well being hereafter : the one is transient, fleeting, and momentary, and altogether uncertain ; the other is permanent fruition of uninterrupted joy and felicity for ever, amongst an innumerable company of saints and angels, and spirits of just men made perfect, continuing the inexhaustible theme of praises, dominion, and worship to the sovereign Lord of the whole universe.

I have had to remark, in my travels through divers parts of this city, many loitering
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tering as upon the skirts of the camp ; and the sword of Amalek hath destroyed numbers. I beseech you, my beloved friends, let your eye be unto godliness ; and though it falls not to the godly to be always blessed with the affluence of worldly riches, yet you will assuredly find unspeakable consolation resulting from the divine favour and goodness towards you, which will abundantly counterbalance every worldly consideration. Be not of this world ; but let your views be directed towards a better country, even a pure undefiled holy habitation ; a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Seek not after riches ; suffer not your attention to be diverted from the pursuit of virtue, nor be desirous after the vain, foolish, transitory amusements of a degenerate age ; for all these things will terminate in sorrow and distress of mind, and riches make themselves wings and flee away ; but godliness is profitable in all things : it will be your support in every trial, your never failing consolation under every difficulty, and ultimately afford you a comfortable evidence of admission into the permanent joys of eternity, in a glorious and unfading recompence, which the Father
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and Fountain of unlimited mercy and goodness has prepared for all those who diligently seek him. Therefore, my dear young friends, suffer me once more strongly to recommend you, in the early part of your life, to seek the God of your Fathers, the never-failing help of those who seek him in sincerity ; and I will say this for your encouragement, that though the heavens should pass away, and the earth should be removed out of its place, the lofty mountains should dissolve and be no more, yet the promises of the Lord are amply verified to them that fear him. It is a blessing which makes truly rich, and adds no sorrow with it ; it will assuredly attend the humble efforts of a life dedicated to his service, administer comfort under every trying dispensation of his Providence, and be your exceeding great reward ; for godliness is riches in poverty, and is profitable in all things.

AN

Epistle to Friends.

By SAMUEL FOTHERGILL.

Dear Friends,

IT hath for some time lain pretty heavy upon me to write a few lines to you upon the following account. The Lord in his everlasting kindness (that long strove with my soul) has been pleased to unstop my deaf ear, that I might hear him the Shepherd of his flock ; and to open my blind eyes, and let me see my state, as it really was, very desperate and very lamentable. He has shewn me the dreadful precipice I was at the brink of, and breathed into me the breath of life ; in order that I might arise from the dead and live ; he has set my sins in order before me, and shewn me how far I had estranged myself from, and raised strong desires in me to return to him, the Redeemer of my soul. The consideration of his kindness has raised in my soul a just abhorrence of my former practices, which induces me to make this
public

public declaration of them, which I desire to do in a few words.

I know my sins were so many, and so obvious to every one, as that it is impossible and needless to recount and remark them; for I was then as in the bond of iniquity, though it has pleased the Father of mercies to bring me since into the very gall of bitterness, and into anxiety of soul inexpressible; yea, not to be apprehended by any, but those who have trod the same path and drank of the same cup: yet, blessed be the name of God, he who hath kindled breathings in my soul after him, would sometimes break in upon me; and though the waves of Jordan have gone over my head, his supporting arm was underneath, that I should not be discouraged. He, in his infinite love, has given me to understand that the things that belong to my peace were not utterly hid from my eyes; that though I had drank up iniquity as an ox drinketh up water, although I had exceeded all others in sin, had long done despite to him, yet there was mercy with him, that he might be feared.

Now would I address myself to the youth amongst you, in a certain sense of the divine extendings

extendings of that love wherewith he has loved us, and salute you with sincere desires, that that God which visited our fathers while aliens and strangers to him, may be our God ; that we may embrace the day of our visitation, and not turn our backs of so great a mercy as he, I am sensible, is daily extending. Oh ! I have tasted of this love, I have had to celebrate his name, and though unfit for the work, I cannot be easy, nor discharge my known duty, without intreating you to forsake the vanities of the world ; for the end thereof is unavoidable sorrow and endless torment. But happy are they who, by a timely application, are earnestly seeking the Lord, who will (I speak from blessed experience) be found of those who early and diligently seek him ; for he has appeared to me (when I was afraid I was forgot) as a morning without clouds, to my exceeding great encouragement and consolation ; and strengthened me in my resolutions to follow him, who had done so much for my soul. Bear with me yet a little, for I write not my own words : that blessed Saviour has laid it upon me, who is willing that all should be saved and come to him : let him, I intreat
you,

you, have his perfect work in you; he will wash you, or else you have no part in him. I can truly say that, during the time of my first conviction, my lips quivered and my belly trembled, that my soul might rest in the day of trouble.

I chose not to write this, but I cannot be easy unless I call others to the like enjoyment. In bowels of tender love I again salute you, and take my leave of you, with strong desires that you who are advanced in years, and favoured with the Lord, may remember me when it is well with you; and that I may be preserved, though beset with temptation on every hand. The Lord in mercy be near you, faith my soul. Farewell.

AN
E P I S T L E

TO

Friends of the Island of Tortola.

Written 17th 3d Mo. 1760.

By SAMUEL FOTHERGILL.

Dear Friends,

THOUGH I am personally a stranger and unknown to most of you, yet ye have been, of late time especially, so frequently the subject of close thoughtfulness to me, and with so much warmth, as to engage my mind to visit you in a collective capacity with this epistle, from some apprehension of duty, and with an heart replenished with sincere good will ; in which, I wish you the possession of that happiness which is everlasting.

It was tidings of great joy to the living body of friends in this land, to hear that the Lord Almighty was at work in your island,

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to beget children to himself; and that the same substantial virtue which wrought upon this and other nations, to redeem and purify them a people to the praise of his great name, had also visited you with a day spring from on high, and produced the same blessed fruits in measure, even a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness; and by the baptism of the Holy Ghost, brought them into one spiritual body, whereof Christ is head.

Oh! the tenderness, the fear, and the watchfulness, which attended some of your souls in that day; a precious day of visitation, which ought for ever to be remembered; a day wherein the Lord allured some of you, and brought you into the wilderness, speaking comfortably to you, and in his own time gave you vineyards from thence. Some of you, I believe, have in remembrance those times of divine betrothing, and cannot but acknowledge it was the Lord's doing. Then the mind was humbled as in the dust, and a living concern arose to walk in white, and to enter into covenant with the Lord your God; a covenant you then hoped would never be broken. In this simplicity of heart
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the Lord's children are ever safest; Almighty power watching over them for good, and regarding them with a Father's care. As individuals amongst you were thus engaged, the sympathy and fellowship of the one body spread over sea and land, and we became as epistles written in one another's hearts, and were baptized by the one spirit into the one body; wherein is the bond of peace and unity of saints: in this stood our rejoicing on your account, for it is not the accession of numbers to our name, but the gathering of souls to the everlasting Shepherd, which gives joy to the Lord's family in heaven and earth.

Now, dear friends, is not the dew of your morning at times brought to recollection, and its heavenly relish remembered? Yet hath not a loss sensibly attended you, and the once promising plantation amongst you become less fruitful and beautiful? If so, where shall we inquire for the cause? We shall not find any deficiency in divine compassion, but the loss hath been occasioned by a neglect to follow on to know the Lord in his own way and leading; and a departure in heart from him hath ensued, whereby
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the work hath been marred ; and that goodness, wherein the holy unchangeable One would have established you, and have rendered a permanent blessing and beauty to you, hath been, to too many, as a morning cloud ; and as the early dew it hath soon passed away. Such ever was the consequence of unfaithfulness to the discoveries of the pure light ; weakness, revolt, and backsliding have ensued ; and when people have forsaken the fountain of living waters (which is open for sanctification and refreshment), all their labour and inventions have been as broken cisterns that can hold no water ; and the latter end of such, unless they return and repent, will be worse than their former unenlightened state. Bear with me, dear friends, in this freedom ; my soul longs for your help and restoration : that by and through you, the great Name may be exalted in those islands ; and that part of the Lord's footstool may become glorious. Let, I beseech you, the seeming foremost rank amongst you look closely to their own steps, and consider carefully whether they have not by some means contributed to the general decay of lively zeal and care, through their own declension

clension and lukewarmness; for it is most certain, that the faithfulness or unfaithfulness of this rank, hath a very great influence over young and tender minds, as well as over those who may be more advanced in years than experience, and yet who are not void of a secret relish for heavenly matters. Return, therefore, I beseech you, Oh! ye chiefs amongst the people, to your first love, and do your first works, lest greater desolation ensue; and lest he who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, come unto you quickly, and remove yours out of its place; for why should the candlestick remain, when the light and lustre of the candle are extinguished?

And, dearly beloved friends of the rising generation, and ye in the prime of life, suffer, and receive the word of exhortation from one who tenderly loves you; remember your Creator and your Judge; let not the foolish amusements, or vain conversation of this world prevail, to turn you aside from your great and everlasting interest; remember there is not any thing of this world that can lay the foundation of eternal peace. It is an earnest humble seeking after the sanc-

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tifying hand, and submission to its virtue, which can alone fashion you as vessels of honour, and fit you for the heavenly kingdom; cherish the secret drawings of divine love; be not ashamed of its tendering, restraining effects; why should you sell your souls for a thing of nought? For such will be the smiles and frowns of this world in a day that is hastily approaching. Let not therefore the evil example of others, nor the reproach of the scornful, prevail to your hurt; but retain the fear of God, which will keep the heart clean, and be an excellent enduring treasure when every thing else shall vanish as a vapour. And it most certainly behoves you, friends, who are natives of this land, and have had your education amongst us as a people, and been frequently directed to the heavenly monitor, to walk with great circumspection. Ye are amongst a people who have been made partakers of the like precious faith with us, principally through the immediate reach of a divine hand. Will not their eyes be turned to look at your conduct, and to observe the fruits of your faith, by its prevalence in your lives and conversation? And if, in-
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stead of the blessed fruits of righteousness, the contrary should appear, and your conduct be the means of stumbling to any, and evil liberties be pursued by you, to your and others hurt; to such I testify, in the name, and under an awful sense of the authority of the Most High, it had been better for them never to have known the way of righteousness. Heavy, very heavy, will be the weight of the complicated guilt of their own transgressions, and the transgressions of others made worse by their example. Woe from a righteous and dreadful God to those, by whom such offences come.

I make no doubt but there is amongst you an honest seed; an afflicted and poor people; some of the Lord's poor, who retain in some good degree their first love, and bewail the hurt of Sion. I beseech such to stand fast in their own lots, to abide in the faith and patience, to be sober and hope to the end: though the times are gloomy, the outgoings of the morning are of God; and he can, and will in his own time, cause the wilderness to become a fruitful field. Look not too much at the declension of others, lest your faith should fail; but stedfastly look

to, and follow on to know, the Lord Almighty who remains for ever; the defection of multitudes can by no means impair his unchangeable truth and righteousness. In a sense of the fresh extendings of ancient, all-sufficient help, I most tenderly and affectionately salute you. May the scattered amongst you be brought home, and the negligent be roused to diligence, whilst yet a day continues; let the tender breathings still remaining be cherished, that they may gather strength, and enter with holy prevalence the ear of the Lord and Father of his people.

This is the sincere prayer of one concerned at heart for your restoration and stability in righteousness and peace for ever.

EPISTLE

TO

Friends of Penketh Meeting.

By SAMUEL FOTHERGILL.

Nantucket, 28th 6th Mo. 1755.

Dearly beloved Friends, -

IN the sensible renewings of that melting, humbling love, which hath often bowed my spirit and yours in reverent holy worship, when present with you, do I affectionately salute the truly living amongst you, as present in spirit, though, for the cause of truth, far separated in body; yet by no means less inwardly anxious for your establishment in the unchangeable truth, than when present amongst you, and engaged in labour for your help and growth into your several measures of the fullness of Christ. In which true love my spirit hath often secretly reached towards you, and of late with that unreserved

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openness, as to allow me at least a liberty to salute you with a token of love unfeigned.

First to you, my beloved friends, partakers of the heavenly calling; who have surely known him in whom you have believed, and been made witnesses of his powerful resurrection unto life; my soul is at this instant bowed with and for you, that nothing may be admitted to weaken your hold, or diminish your following on to know him, and his work, who hath made his voice known, and his holy arm bare for your help. I have seen the snares laid in your way; the love of the world, and the indolent rest, in the remembrance of former favour; together with the strong touches of heavenly help, which have been considered as marks of approbation of your present state, rather than what the Lord Almighty intended them for; even strong inducements to follow on to know him. This fatal mistake hath sometimes led the truly visited into a partial work, and centred them in a false rest; in a low and dwarfish weak state, subject to frequent failures and bruises, which have eclipsed and dimmed the beauty which the Lord of the heritage would have indued you with.

Therefore,

Therefore, beloved friends, wait for and submit to the shaking, loosening power, which would lead from the unnecessary embarrassments of this world; for such are those which lead to forget God. Follow faithfully to Bethel, to Jericho, through Jordan, and to the last vision of the heavenly messenger; so shall a double portion of the spirit rest upon you, and the name and cause of the highest be magnified, your own treasures enlarged, and those who are behind encouraged, by your example, to diligence and steady care to possess the like durable inheritance.

On the contrary, where negligence and weakness, through a worldly spirit, prevail amongst the seeming foremost ranks, it encourages in undue liberties, relaxes necessary care after their own help, and is a stumbling block in the way of the weak; who gladly admit of these discouraging prospects, as they flatter their own negligence, and speak a language calculated to indulge them in their remissness suitably to labour for hidden treasure in their own possession. Let therefore the word of exhortation be received by you, to stir up to an increase in faithful

obedience; ever bearing in your remembrance the loving-kindness of the Lord of sure mercies and its end, even your own establishment, and the help of others by your living example; that you, being faithful followers of him who hath entered into rest, may say to others, ‘Follow me as I follow Christ.’

And I am fully assured that the reverent, honest, travellers amongst you, to whom my spirit is secretly united, will not be overlooked. Although they may have pensively to muse in the roll written within and without, lamentation, mourning, and woe, he who has bowed the heavens, and come down for the help of his own seed, will not turn away his holy ear from their requests, but speedily arise for their sure deliverance.

You also, my friends, who are not so sensibly united by a birth from the immortal seed to the true family as I have often begged for you, have a place in my remembrance; and an affectionate concern that you might be prevailed with to work while it is yet day with you, and be excited to seek after the one thing: a solemn approaching hour will convince you that it is absolutely

lutely needful for peace and rest for ever. How long hath the gracious hand been extended for your help; even all the day long, until the evening has drawn near, and his locks have been wet with its dews; unwilling to leave, and graciously mindful of you. Oh! that none such may survive the extending of the blessed arm of all-substantial strength, and remain in advanced life as trees twice dead and plucked up by the roots; reserved for Tophet, prepared of old for those who forget God.

And oh! that the youth amongst you, to whom even Dives' desire for his brethren, that one might be raised and sent from the dead to warn them, hath been granted, of which I am a living monument, might be roused in every heart to seek carefully after their own interest, and to study betimes those things which can alone make their lives truly comfortable, and enable them to fill up their essential duties here, and rest in peace at the solemn approaching conclusion. Whatever place it may now have with you, satisfied I am you have been eminently favoured; and line upon line, precept upon precept, have been given, in the spreading of gathering love and

mercy, which my soul craves your reverent remembrance of, to your profit; for they will not fall to the ground, but remain as profitable direction to the right minded, or a dreadful hand-writing upon the wall against the rebellious and negligent. For thus, even now, saith the Lord Almighty, respecting the issue of his word, to his visited people, as of old, “As the rain cometh
“down and the snow from heaven, and
“returneth not thither, but watereth the
“earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud,
“that it may give seed to the sower, and
“bread to the eater: so shall my word be
“that goeth forth of my mouth: it shall not
“return unto me void, but it shall accom-
“plish that which I please, and it shall prof-
“per in the thing whereto I sent it.”

Oh! therefore, dear young friends, be warned in time, to bow in heart to this word, that you may know it to be a word of sure comfort in a day when nothing else can speak peace to the soul; and that through its sanctifying virtue, you may be made vessels of honour in the house of God: that the labour frequently and affectionately bestowed upon you, may not be in vain to any
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among you. I am sensible there are good desires at times prevalent in some of your minds; but, alas! often weakened by the hurtful things which are spread as snares in the path of youth, and which often endanger the unwary, careless mind, and lead it into certain destruction: but there is an All-sufficient Hand, able and willing to direct and support in all perils, and to conduct steadily and safely to that durable possession, which is reserved for those of all ranks and every age, who seek diligently by faith and patience to inherit glory.

I have, on my own account, cause of reverent worship for the continuance of daily support, proportioned, not to my deserving, but to the abundant condescension of a gracious God; who hath every way helped me inwardly and outwardly in this laborious service, and hath supplied with wisdom and strength to labour to some service, and my own great peace, in humble reverent trust in his unchangeable love and help, which hath not yet failed. So that I have often with a soul inwardly melted before the throne of grace, admired his goodness, and had to acknowledge his unutterable kindness

and mercy in engaging my heart to devote the bloom and strength of my life to his service, who is ever worthy of love, obedience, and the tribute of a devoted heart. Amen, Amen.

Thus, beloved friends, the yearning of an affectionate heart reaches to you, and craves for you sure help in the way of righteousness and peace; that if I be restored again to you, there may be a sensible increase and growth; that you may be a joyful prospect to me; and that my return, if permitted, and of which I have a secret hope, may be to you in the fullness of the gospel of peace, and not with sorrow and distress on your account.

The everlasting, holy, and unchangeable God of all comfort be near you, to strengthen that which remains alive and should live, to support you in every difficulty, and preserve you as a well fenced and frequently watered garden, is the prayer of your true friend and well-wisher.

L E T T E R

To a Friend, after the Decease of her Husband.

By SAMUEL FOTHERGILL.

Warrington.

IT hath, my dear friend, been my frequent desire to him who hath the hearts of all men in his hand, that he would give me a sympathising mind; and the effect of varied exercises in the course of my pilgrimage, hath been so far rendered useful (through gracious help) as to obtain my earnest wish; and in this sympathising sense I have dropped the tribute of a tear to the memory of thy dear husband, now no more, and that of affectionate condolence with thee who feelest unspeakably the dissolution of the most tender tie. Religion authorises, as well as nature, to feel deeply on such occasions; it cannot be culpable in the sight of the Author of our being; for if the holy Jesus wept for Lazarus his friend, shall the tears of the widow,

widow, poured forth on the removal of a most affectionate husband, an agreeable companion, with whom she has had sweet society, and in whose company she has gone up to the house of God, be offensive in the sight of him who well knows our frame? I think not, if an humble labor after acquiescence to the sovereign disposal cover thy anxious, pained mind.

As a man, I feel and view with sorrow the mighty chasm his removal hath occasioned in various useful relations; my own particular affection hath lost a pleasing object of its attachment; and the circle of my most near connection in pure friendship is painfully invaded. Yet, my friend, let us look on the other side of the question; for whom are we afflicted,—one now for ever free from it:—recollect his memory, it is precious; his conduct in every station was uniform; he hath left this world crowned with the diadem of religion and virtue, and is gone before us, and sooner than we wished it, to the rest of souls; and out of the many intricate mazes through advanced years and old age, by a shorter passage, to the new Jerusalem, than many others are exercised
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in. Endeavour therefore to submit to the disposal of him who well knows what is best for us, and will ever promote it with a wise and fatherly care ; if we, as dutiful children, kiss the rod, and cast our care and confidence upon him. May thy mind be stayed in holy quietude, and thy hold confirmed in that All-sufficiency, wherein all the deficiencies attending mortals may be made up. Walk thou before this everlasting helper, in steady obedience, and he will be thy sun and thy shield.

To _____

By SAMUEL FOTHERGILL.

Warrington, 11th Mo. 20, 1750.

Dear Friend,

I received in Dublin a letter from thee, which gave me satisfaction. I rejoice in this, that the Lord of heaven and earth is visiting by his truth, and working by his power, to beget into his heavenly family; and to bless his people with that which conveys all the happiness mankind ever did, must now, or hereafter can taste. Too many are insensible of it, and others are too lazy to be religious as they ought: but it is our own interest to pursue our own peace, and to transmit to others examples, how great and excellent a thing it is to be true subjects of Christ's kingdom, baptised into his nature and therein to abide. Great has been his mercy in visiting our souls with his blessed truth; and it highly behoves us to watch with all diligence, lest we render it frustrate.

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This is our duty; to look to him daily: this comprehends all; here is our strength and safety; other stays on temporary helps will fail, and leave us destitute and inwardly lean. O! therefore remember often the dew of thy youth, the tenderness of thy heart when first met with; cherish in thy soul the fresh instances of regard, and be it thy care inwardly to look and live to the Lord; so shall thy hands be made strong, and thy head kept above the waters.

There is a spirit that is gone forth into the camp, and is splendidly delusive; it delights in good words and feeds upon them; it cries out, help, help; but principally to the servants, and not to the master. This spirit leads into notions; it snuffs up the wind, and lives on the commotions itself raises; all that are led by it are superficial, and know nothing, and must lie down in sorrow. That holy spirit which was, and is the ground of Truth for ever (which I trust has reached thy heart) is a substantial, operative principle; its directions are not imaginary, nor its doctrines loose and indeterminate; but it is as light and life to its possessors, and causes them to inherit substance;

stance; it teaches access in heart to that God, whose attributes cannot be defined fully, but which experience teaches: it supplies their wants, supports their steps, and opens their understandings into those divine truths that are higher than human wisdom: let this spirit be leaned upon above all, this will help us to stand upright, and walk steadily in the faith delivered to the saints. Retirement will be pleasant in meetings and out of meetings; the inward feeling of divine power to live and act to God's honour, and our own preservation, will be dear and precious to us; and he that delights to hear the language of his children, will not be slack in the performance of his gracious promises.

I found the free salutation of pure love in my heart towards thee, and earnestly intreat thee to abide stedfast in the truth; feel after it, live in it, hope for its salvation, and it will never fail. I salute thee in the love and affection of Christ, our holy and blessed helper.

To _____

By SAMUEL FOTHERGILL.

Tenth Mo. 9th, 1771.

Esteemed Friend,

My strong desires for thy welfare have frequently suggested a few sentiments, which engagements, or indisposition, have prevented my intimating to thee, and this further consideration hath sometimes prevailed; what can I say to him which he knows not, either with respect to his present, or future well-being; is there a truth conducive to either, of which I may not say he is acquainted? The opportunities of information outwardly, and the impressions of essential truths inwardly, have precluded every plea of ignorance of duty, and of what makes for peace. But carefully remember, I beseech thee, that blessedness consisteth not in knowledge; “Ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them;” my soul seeks earnestly that the
blessing

bleſſing of faithfulneſs may accompany the privilege of knowledge; otherwiſe the greater will be the condemnation of the unfaithful.

Thoſe who ſeek wiſdom and divine knowledge, and deſire to be wiſe unto ſalvation, may in themſelves find the flowings of that river which makes glad the whole city of God. O! feel after this in thy own heart, to preſerve thee amongſt the few names in that *Sardis*, that thou mayeſt be kept, more and more helped to walk in *white*, to thy own peace and others help. Remember the inſtruction of that awful query, “What is a
“man profited if he gain the whole world
“and loſe his own ſoul?”

I moſt ſincerely deſire thy welfare, and it is only as thou keepeſt near the eternal preſerving power, that thou canſt fare well.

To ——— on the Death of her Daughter.

By SAMUEL FOTHERGILL.

Dear Friend,

MY mind hath deeply partaken with thee and thy children upon the present very afflicting circumstance of the removal of thy daughter. The breach of so tender a connexion cannot fail of producing deep sorrow in a mind much less susceptible of tender impressions than thine; and I really sympathize with thee in thy present lot. But, dear friend, when we reflect upon the amiable endearing qualifications of deceased relations, these are additional motives for us to bemoan our loss; yet as they thereby are prepared for a resting place beyond the bounds of sorrow and calamity, the inducements to grief may be wisely considered as its alleviation. The debt to nature must be paid; we are transient sojourners in a world of probation and exercise, and ought not to
repine

repine if it please the Author of all wisdom and mercy to bring to a glorious rest by a shorter path than a long succession of weary painful steps through the weakness and affliction that often fill the cup of advanced years. I know there are in the present case circumstances that aggravate the loss; a family of young children stripped of an affectionate mother, of the prudent Christian, to form their tender minds to virtue and religion, and of a good example to walk before them in the road to happiness; but there is an all-sufficient hand of power able and willing to guard and protect in every state; and the offspring of the faithful share in its gracious offers, in a singular degree.

I remember with warmth some of the last prophetic expressions of my honoured mother to her afflicted husband, my dear father, respecting him, his children, and herself, ‘Thou
‘ wilt be blessed, they will be cared for, and
‘ there is a place provided for me. They will
‘ not be left under the tuition of a father
‘ who, like too many now a days, will neglect
‘ their truest interest; but one who knowing
‘ whence every good comes, will seek, I trust,
‘ with proper care to the gracious all-sufficient

‘ ficient Father for himself and for his offspring.’ Thou, dear friend, hast largely partaken of afflictions ; many have been thy bitter cups ; and this, in the decline of life, must be indeed exceedingly hard ; but I beseech thee to remember who it was that delivered in the sixth, and rest in a humble hope he will not forsake thee in the seventh trouble.

To ———, *after her Marriage.*

By SAMUEL FOTHERGILL.

Warrington.

Dear Friend and Kinswoman,

AMONGST the many friends who feel wishes for thy happiness, none desires it with more sincerity than myself, though more silent about it than some others; and as a testimony of it I sit down to throw before thee a few hints which may contribute to thy advantage if attended to; even to render thy life easy and happy, and useful to others, and thine end honourable and peaceful.

First, and principally, thy duty to the Almighty Lord and Maker of all things; in whom, and through whom, all things consist; the Sovereign Author of all blessings. Let Him ever be looked unto, and remembered by thee in this light, and let thy mind be humbly engaged to seek his favours; let nothing impair thy love and dependance upon him; he it is that can blast every
pleasing

pleasing prospect, can wither every hope, and sanctify every affliction. Be not ashamed to demonstrate that thy hope is in him, by humbly walking before him; it is in vain to expect a total freedom from sorrowful events, and it is an excellent mercy to have on such occasions the staff of all ages to lean upon.

2d. Thy duty to thy husband: who, if I judge right, will, from his affection and tenderness for thee, be intitled to every degree of a mutual return from thee. Study his temper, accommodate thy own to it; I have seen great inconveniences arise in the married life through inattention. Where the wife hesitates at the request of her husband, and yields at last a reluctant obedience, this imperceptibly diminishes that tender affection which is the very life and comfort of the married state; gradually creates a distance, and then life may be uncomfortably dragged along, but not happily enjoyed. Cultivate in his mind and thy own every religious sentiment; strengthen that part as much as possible; hereby a twofold cord of divine love and natural affection will unite you in a covenant never to be broken.

3d. Towards Friends of the meeting into
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which thou art removing, let thy conduct be humble, affable, and exemplary; not assuming, but on the contrary, preferring others, that others may prefer thee. Humility is the surest way to honour; let no emulation to be greater than some, and equal to the greatest, ever be suffered to be harboured in thy breast; for this will insensibly raise displeasure, envy, and other disagreeable affections, in the minds of others; and let thy dress be rather beneath, than on the level of thy circumstances; it will be to thy reputation.

4th. Let it become thy constant watch to avoid that ruinous practice of tatling, tale-bearing, and secret reflections; those sources of division and mischief are hateful to God and men: this character sets itself as the object of general contempt, its hand is against every one, and every one's hand and heart will be against them who merit it. The concerns of one's own mind and family are sufficient to employ a prudent mind, without interfering with others unnecessarily. Notwithstanding this, secret reproof, where just, immediately addressed to the party, is a beautiful and useful part of friendship.

5th. Let thy husband's relations become dear to thee; it is a connexion of tender affinity, cultivate every sentiment of friendship and affection for them, especially his mother, with every of whose anxieties a son must secretly sympathize.

Excuse, dear ——, the freedom of these hints, they arise not from any painful apprehensions of a contrary conduct, or thy being in any great danger; but my affection for thee induces me to wish thee to be found in the way to blessing: even the blessing of the heaven above, of the earth beneath, the blessing of the ancient mountains, and of the everlasting hills.

May the Lord of all favour crown thee and thine with them, is my humble prayer on thy behalf.

To —————

By SAMUEL FOTHERGILL.

Dear Friend,

I HAVE felt such a degree of anxious concern for thee since our parting, as to induce me to address this letter to thee, and from the warmth of an affectionate heart, to offer something for thy consideration which thy temporal and eternal welfare requires thy attending to. Notwithstanding many of our youth, and myself among others, have despised the simplicity of a plain appearance like a Friend, yet am I satisfied from the neglect of that distinction being maintained, they and thou have been laid open to the inducements of that destroying enemy who hath great power over the inhabitants of the earth, and then leaned to an earthly spirit. Thou hast fatally found the truth of this remark. If thou hadst appeared like a religious,
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sober Friend, those companions who have exceedingly wounded thee, durst not have attempted to frequent thy company. Thou seest ———, his conduct and appearance are consistent and sober; none of those wicked young men dare approach him, such is the dignity of religion, and its superiority over folly and vice. I mention him not from any partial regard for him as my kinsman, but as a person I have had frequent opportunities to remark. Thou knowest the esteem he has justly obtained, his usefulness in his father's family, and that he is more justly honoured than, I think, any young man in town. I mention him not to upbraid thee, but to intreat thee; his manners are virtuous, his mind serene and peaceful; the contrary, thy own experience will tell thee, hath been thy lot, and it results from a conduct opposite to his; nevertheless I am persuaded the regard of Divine Providence is not totally withdrawn from thee, his mercy is extended to recover thee as from the gates of hell, and pluck thee as a brand out of the fire. My concern for thee, the kind reception thou hast met with at ———, and the dispositions of the worthy friends

there in receiving thee, are to me proofs of the interposition of a providential hand yet stretched out to save, and these things ought to be humbly marvellous in thine eyes, and induce thee to walk answerably to the favours received.

I earnestly wish thee to abstain from any company that may be improper; thy resolutions are weak, the poison of evil company very ruinous; if thou hast no other inducement to alter thy dress, I beseech thee to do it to keep the distinction our principles lead to, and to separate thee from *fools* and *fops*; at the same time that by a prudent distinction in thy appearance thou scatterest away those that are the bane of youth, thou wilt engage the attention of those whose company will be profitable and honourable to thee.

Thus dear friend, my heart longs for thee and for thy help, that thou mayst improve the present providential allotment to the best purpose, and as thy present situation is much more laborious than it was at thy father's house, I beseech thee submit to it cheerfully; it is abundantly necessary, and may be a means of lasting advantage to thee. It will be good for thee to bear the yoke in thy youth,

youth ; if thy mind be rightly subjected to it thou mayst have cause to say, it was good for me that I was troubled.

I beseech thee often to read the Holy Scriptures ; remember the prodigal son, and imitate his penitent example, and the same gracious reception from the Everlasting Father will be thy portion. With what joy would thy anxious parent, thy affectionate sister, view thee reformed ; steady and prudent ; but if (which God forbid) thou shouldst slight this providential opportunity of retrieving thyself, and relapse into those things which have hitherto ministered much to thy hurt, and if continued in, must (as it has many others) effect thy total ruin ; how shall I look those friends in the face, to whose care I have been instrumental to commit thee ? And what will be the sentence from despised mercy ? I am shocked at the mere supposition ; but what must be the suffering of such a state ? Dear ———, what shall I say ; what can I say that will tend to thy help, but earnestly press thee to seek him who is mighty to save, and to whom Jonah cried from the belly of hell ? Cherish every impression of good, place thy-

self frequently before that tremendous bar, before which thou art hastening, and bring every thought and action to judgment; be diligent and faithful in business; but above all, be diligent in making provision for thy poor soul. Farewel.

*To ——— after the Decease of her
Husband.*

By SAMUEL FOTHERGILL.

2d Mo. 4th, 1757.

Dear Friend,

THAT affectionate regard which truth itself raised mutually in our hearts, is by no means impaired: often, very often, since I left your land, has it been strongly renewed; and more especially upon receiving the sorrowful tidings of the removal of thy dear husband; a circumstance in which the affliction is, like the loss, very extensive. Thou mournest the loss of a tender husband, his children that of an affectionate father:—the church laments a pillar removed out of the place it filled, at a time when it was greatly wanted; an allowable sorrow:—for the perfect example of every virtue, even Jesus himself, wept for Lazarus.

This nature demands when its connexions are broken, and the endearing, social ties

dissolved for ever! But thou well knowest (and I hope it now stands thee in stead) that we are pilgrims, and strangers as our fathers were; and each journeying on through this region of distress towards that city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker God is. Why then should we grieve too much, if a companion, a beloved companion, with whom we have traversed many dubious, anxious steps, hath his entrance into the holy city a few moments before us; and enjoy consummate felicity whilst we stand at the door, and wait also for the same glorious fruition, of which we at times receive the joyful earnest?

Upon all the glory of the earth, and all its enjoyments, upon every visible thing, one inscription is written as the immutable determination of Him whose name is Most High, "They shall perish:" throughout all nature and natural connexions, however endearing, it has been and must be verified. Equally fixed is the subsequent truth, the joy and song of many generations, but thou remainest, and thy years shall not fail." On this everlasting Husband, Father, Friend, and Succour, mayst thou and thine now lean;
and

and know this dispensation sanctified and blessed to all your help, in renewing diligent care so to live and move, that, when the Great Shepherd shall appear, and all his faithful servants with him, your portion may be amongst them for ever.

And now, methinks, I cannot avoid addressing myself to you the descendants of my honoured, because honourable friend. I am convinced that the same gracious hand which was his comfort, has been near to some of you for the like glorious purpose, even to establish you before him for ever! but I am jealous that the want of religious depth and simplicity God-ward hath been the cause of halting; and that there has been rather a choice to embrace the present world, and have a name of eminence in it, than to have a new name of God, and the city of God. Thus will the heavenly tenders of immortal kindness be disregarded, and the vain shadows of things be preferred to those substantial riches which none ever sought with too great diligence; or if they sold them, got their worth in exchange. A heart honestly concerned for your help cannot contain, or dictate, the language of flattery: I love you

nearly, and therefore thus write. I am also persuaded there is a seed and heritage that mourns in secret because of its leanness, and honestly seeks relief whence it has ever sprung: may stability and patience be the girdle of their loins; and in the Lord's time this poor suppliant, distressed seed, will delight itself in fatness!

One general hint from my own experience would I suggest to you young people: Let all your conduct demonstrate that you remember the worthy deceased with due affection; and though he be, with respect to the body, dead, yet let him speak.

I have found it my duty and great advantage, to place frequently in my view my worthy father; and in cases of importance, or dubious cases, to consult what would have pleased him, who was ripe in experience and judgment. I believe this reverence to the memory of a worthy parent is an oblation of sweet incense before the everlasting Father!

Farewel, Dear —; may Israel's rock be thy safe abode; and keep thee fresh in spirit; green and fruitful in old age; and finally unite thee to him, and the many generations

generations of the just, who are stepped before us within the gates of pearl !

Farewel, ye descendants of the great and good: imitate their example; as they have followed Christ, follow ye them. Be wise, for it is true happiness: in wisdom you will fear to offend; and this fear is an excellent defence.

To ————— on his Marriage.

By SAMUEL FOTHERGILL.

Dear Friend,

I WAS duly favoured with thine, and should have written sooner had ability and leisure united; for there hath lived in my mind a salutation to thee, the object of my tender solicitude, and to thy wife, thy companion in every tender sense, the joint objects of my affectionate well wishing. I consider you as now entering the more arduous scenes of life, and filling more important stations than during your single state; and most earnestly desire you may, now on your first entrance into the more arduous path, be wisely directed; for much depends on this important crisis.

With a heart replenished with earnest affection, I recommend the Psalmist's words, representing the wife of all ages, "In the name of our God we will set up our banners." This is a proper allusion to your state, who
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have associated together in the most delicate and tender bonds of union, to be each others help-mates, to soften every care, to enhance every comfort, to divide every burden, reciprocally and mutually to help each other in every temporal respect; and not only so, but to go up hand in hand together to the house of God, and the mountain of his holiness. In order to obtain that permanent felicity of the conjugal state, in the name of your God, set up your banners. Let nothing divert your minds from a humble attentive care to put yourselves under his protection: implore his guardianship and tuition: he alone can keep you in times of probation, defend you in the perilous hours, guard you from the dangers of un sanctified, seeming, prosperity; and place his everlasting arm underneath in the time of adversity. Place here your confidence, that you may not be moved. The world, with a variety of blandishments, will present its schemes of happiness, and make large promises of a good it has not in its power to bestow; but may you carefully remember, that in the world, or under the prevalence of its spirit, you will find disappointment and trouble. But in the
name

name and under the banner of God, peace flows as a river, and every cross event and painful allotment is sanctified and sweetened.

Beware, therefore, my dear friends, of rushing into the world of dissipation, which often attends a circumstance similar to yours: beware of a false confidence in the smiles and caresses of men and women of this world's spirit. Beseech the protection and guidance of Him who protects the solitary in families, and buildeth up a sure house to those who in all their ways acknowledge him, and cast themselves on his protection. I trust an holy visitation has given you an understanding what it is that makes for true peace: enter not into selfish deliberations how to avoid plain duty: protract not your stay in a land of jeopardy and danger, by taking counsel and not of God, and covering yourselves and not with the covering of God's spirit. The state of the church requires of you to endeavour to come up to the help of the Lord against that inundation of folly and forgetfulness that prevails: there are no wages equal to those he gives his servants; for surely the reward of the faithful labourer is exceeding great: peace, tranquillity,

quility, and glory, are upon their heads for ever !

Thus, beloved friends, my soul travails for your present and everlasting welfare ; that the solemn engagement you have mutually entered into may be truly fulfilled, and your happiness established on the most durable basis.

The eye of passion, the short-lived fever of the mind, sometimes improperly called love, flatters itself with objects of imagined amiableness and beauty : this is transient and mutable ; but affection, founded on real esteem for an object religion and virtue have rendered truly estimable, hath a permanency in it equal to the causes that produced it. It is not in my mind to descend into every particular point of conduct necessary for your happiness ; these will be clearly opened as occasion requires, and help administered to come up in every duty, to render you truly helpful to each other, useful and honourable in the church and in the world, and objects of divine favour, and acceptance.

But allow me to recommend a close and diligent attendance of meetings, both for worship and discipline : in this most reasonable service,

service the soul hath often been unexpectedly replenished with good, and its strength renewed to step forward in the most holy path. Dare not to live without God in the world, lest he withdraw his blessing; and then, who can make up the deficiency?

Extract of a Letter to a Friend, who had vindicated the principle and practice of Self-defence, or Defensive War, as being consistent with the Doctrine of Christianity.

By S. FOTHERGILL.

Warrington, 8th Mo. 16th, 1764.

My Friend,

SINCE our first acquaintance, which is now of many years standing, thou hast possessed a share in my affectionate friendship, and a hope accompanied my earnest desire for thy preservation in the Truth as it is in Jesus, to an happy conclusion.

Great was my concern, therefore, when I had a considerable time ago, a manuscript of thine transmitted to me, which militated against a material and fundamental testimony, received amongst us as a people.

I beseech thee, call to mind the discoveries and impressions made in the days of tender enquiry after truth and peace with God. Remember what it led to, and what it led from ;

from ; and diligently examine whether thou hast kept thy first love ; whether the spirit of this world hath not entered, and allured thee from that holy circumscribed frame of spirit in which we can alone abide in safety, and witness the salvation of God to be as walls and bullwarks about us. A frequent, impartial scrutiny of this kind, appears to me necessary for us all ; lest, having run well for a time, we should unhappily miss our way, and stumble on the mountains of error, and fall and rise no more. Most necessary, therefore, is the advice, “ Walk in “ the Light, that you may become children “ of the light and of the day” of God ; and be preserved through all the jeopardies of times, and from the deceivableness of unrighteousness, to an happy possession of that crown of life, which is reserved for all those who fight the good fight, and keep the faith.

If, upon a most serious anticipation of that day when every secret shall be disclosed, and true judgment administered, thou find the testimony of divine approbation is not sealed upon thy spirit in this dissent from thy former friends, I intreat thee, by every consideration

sideration which happiness in time or eternity can suggest, stand open to conviction. It is infinitely better to retract an error, though we may fall into the hands, or under the censure of men, than to persist in any doctrine or practice repugnant to the holy witness, and thereby incur divine displeasure. If we fall upon the stone, which is a stone of offence to the wisdom of the world, it will break us to pieces; but if it fall upon us, it will grind us to powder. O may thy mind be turned to the light, and witness the searching of heart for the divisions of Reuben; that natural might and strength, and boasting excellency which secretly spreads itself through the incautious mind; but God, in his wisdom, hath determined that in this kingdom and work it shall never excel.

I ever wish to see love, tenderness, and long-suffering exercised in the society one towards another; and as far as in my power have endeavoured to promote it; that that which is weak may not be turned out of the way, but rather restored.

Nevertheless there is a necessity for a steady regard to be paid to the prime ends of our being raised up as a people, which is,
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the supporting a testimony to the coming of the reign of the peaceable Saviour, whose kingdom is not of this world.

Our worthy ancestors received this testimony, and were called to bear it ; and harmonizing together in the truths of Christianity, they united in one body, and under the dominion of one spirit. A people thus formed for the Lord's use in carrying on the work of reformation in the earth, and whose testimony contradicted the received maxims of the world and its policy, had to expect the opposition and suffering which ensued : first from the powers of the world, which raged at the birth of the man-child, and sought to swallow it up : but he who had called them to shew forth his salvation, and to step forward to the perfection of Christianity, supported them under cruel persecution to his own praise, and the promotion of his Name upon earth.

The second, and most painful cause of distress and sorrow was, the apostacy of some who kept not their habitations in the light ; but departing from the union of the spirit, lost their places in the body, and became its most invidious opposers : their
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plea was liberty, their design licentiousness; to introduce confusion and anarchy; to sap the foundation on which our union stands, and rend the seamless garment of our Lord and Master. After much waiting and tender advice, the church testified to the world that these were not of her, they went out from her, that it might be manifest they were not of her. No injury was done to the person or persons who ceased to be of us by disclaiming our essential principles; it was justice due to the testimony of truth and to the society, to declare to the world that those forsook us, and not we them.

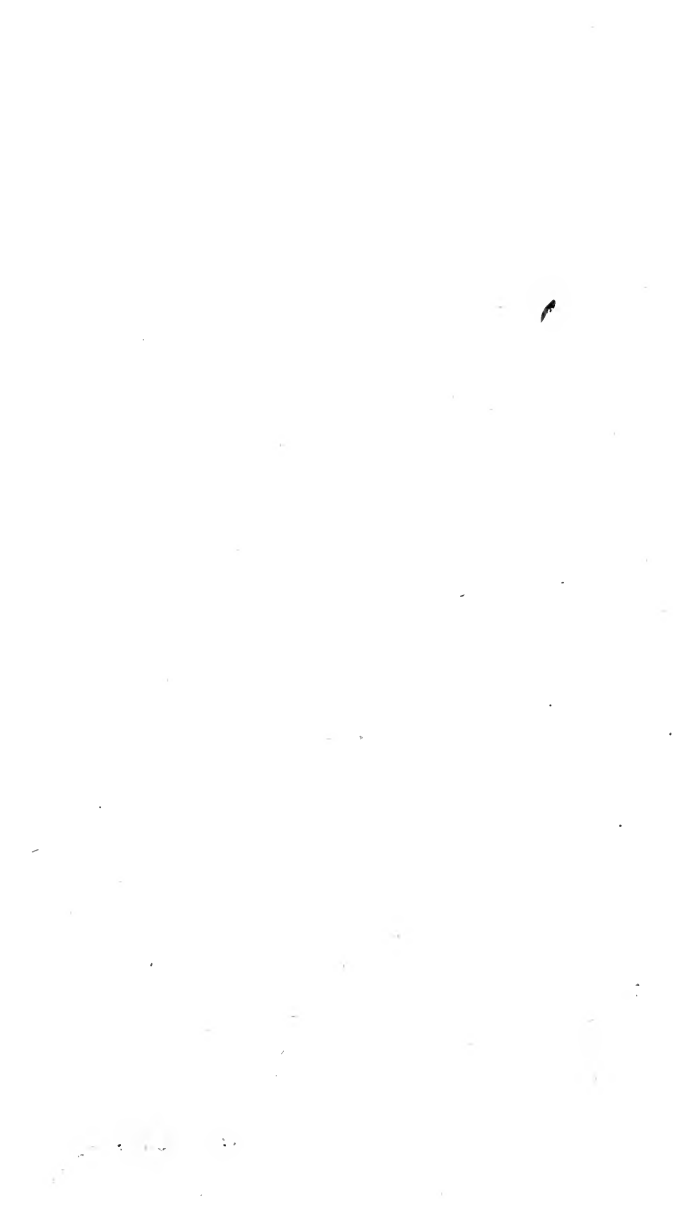
The cause is not ours, it is not of the flesh, nor the will of the flesh, but of God. The longer I live, the clearer I see that it is a testimony which will gain ground, and spread yet more and more amongst mankind. I am convinced of it as a most certain truth, not only from faith in the progress of the spirit and power of our Lord Jesus Christ towards the redemption of the world, and beautifying the place of his feet; but even from the conversation I have had with some of eminent stations in the world. A person of high distinction as a warrior told me some
time

time ago, that though he was a foldier, no part of our principles were more juſt in this apprehenſion than our declining war in every reſpect: he believed the day would come when nation ſhould not lift up ſword againſt nation, nor ſhould they learn war any more: He remarked, ſo mighty a change muſt be gradually brought about; and the morning of that day had, he believed, dawned amongſt us as a people.

Happy are they who abide in their ranks in the Lord's ſervice; they will mingle at at laſt with the conquerors, and inherit all things. I beſeech thee, my friend, conſider things deeply; if thou ceaſe to be one of us as a ſociety raiſed for the purpoſe intimated above, why ſhouldeſt thou endeavour to draw others after thee from the Lord's cauſe:—a work which on a dying bed will not be crowned with peace. Blame not friends for their faithfulneſs to their avowed principles, and ſteady adherence to the cauſe of God. If the way is become too ſtrait for thee to walk in, cenſure not thoſe who dare not leave it, whatever ſuffering may ariſe from the powers of this world, or the defection of ſuch

such among us, from whom we hoped better things.

But the cause of God, and his holy, eternal truth will remain unhurt by the defection of those who forsake him, for the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, “The Lord knoweth them that are his.”



DISCOURSES

BY THE LATE

CATHERINE PHILLIPS.

A

DISCOURSE

*Delivered at the Fryar's Meeting House at
Bristol, 5th of Fifth Month, 1779.*

By CATHERINE PHILLIPS.

I have been glad to observe so many not professing with us in our solemn meetings from day to day, who may be, many of them, in an inquiring state of mind, seeking the way to Zion with their faces thitherward; and I believe, that unto some of these, the testimonies of Truth as professed by us as a people, will one day be made precious, and the religious principles which are testified to in our solemn meetings be seen to be consistent with the nature of the glorious gospel dispensation: for it appears to me that the Lord is at work in the earth, and that he

will bring sons from far and daughters from the ends of the earth, to a settlement in the truth, yea they will come as from the east and from the west, the north and the south, to sit down with the Lord's servants in his kingdom: but oh, my friends, that none of the children may be cast out. My spirit, in this meeting, and indeed at other times when not assembled since my lot hath been cast in this city, hath travailed in unspeakable pain for these,—for the professing members of our own society, that they might become a people settled in the truth they make profession of; that the religious inquiring minds who are seeking their way to Zion, might see the beauty the excellency of their situation, every one by their standard, the unchangeable standard of truth: that this might be their language, “How beautiful are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy dwelling place, “O Israel;” and that others seeing us thus situated, might desire to have their lot and portion with us. Thus, my friends, my spirit has been exercised in the short time we have now been sitting together; and in order that this may be the case, let me revive among you the exhortation of the Lord's exercised servants,

servants, “ Arise and shine ; shake thyself
“ from the dust of the earth ; put on thy
“ beautiful garments, oh Jerusalem.” Thus,
my friends, may we become a people once
more conspicuous unto God’s praise ; who
has pleased, in his abundant mercy, in
our beginning to raise us up by his mighty
hand, to constitute us as a people, to settle
us as a people, so that it was evident, we
were the people whom the Lord formed for
himself, and therefore to shew forth his
praise : and that we may again become this
favoured people, this conspicuously owned
people of the Lord, is the earnest travail of
my spirit : that we may be steadfast, that we may
increase in strength, each of us, whether we
may have had an education in the profession
of truth among us, or among any others,
but having been concerned to come into the
sheepfold the right way. Christ is the door
into the true sheepfold ; if any should intrude
themselves into our religious society, and
take upon them the profession of truth any
other way than through him, they will not
be owned of him, however they may gain a
membership among us as a people. They
will be accounted no better than as thieves.

and robbers, who have stolen a religious profession, and taken up an appearance of truth before they had a proper right so to do. My friends examine yourselves, every one of you, in this point, whether you have been educated in a profession of the truth, or taken it up by convincement; see with what right you bear it, see whether you are sheep of Christ's fold or not: we cannot be so by education merely. There is but one way for any of us, into which he alone can shew us; whether we stand in right membership in this society, or in any religious society, there is but one way into the sheepfold, which is the Truth,—the baptizing influence of the spirit of Christ: for it is indeed by baptism that we are made members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven. Have we been thus baptized, have we, my friends, a right to that high and holy profession which we make, to be the followers of him who overcame the world, and who chooses his followers out of the world. Let all wisely examine themselves this morning, whatever religious profession they may have been educated in; for, my friends, I am jealous over some of you, and I think it is with a godly jealousy, which is accompanied

accompanied with that love that desires you may be sufficiently jealous over your own hearts. Examine nicely into the matter, and see how you stand in the mystical body of Christ, and whether you are members of his church, and have come into the sheep-fold the right way; for I am jealous that many who have had an education among us, have rested too much on their education; and if they have been preserved from the gross crimes that are practised in the world, that they rest contented; especially if they have on them an outside appearance, consistent with the high and holy profession we bear. I am jealous that some of you are not exercised in spirit that they may be such sheep of Christ's fold as know his voice, and follow him; as experience him to be their leader, their director, and the giver unto them of everlasting life. Well, my friends, you that are of sober and orderly conversation, over whom some of us at times in measure rejoice, because you have been so far preserved as to be free of various corruptions that are in the world, through lust; though we are thankful on your account for the preservation of the divine hand vouchsafed, yet we are also sorrowful that you sit down short of what you

ought to be,—a truly spiritually minded people, such as have a real experience of the truths which you profess, and hold forth unto the world. Let me put you on an examination, many of you now present, into your experience on this important subject, and I am ready to think you will find it but very low. Although many of your minds have been visited, and your spirits tendered time after time, and good desires raised in them, and sometimes resolutions have been formed that you would sink down much deeper into a religious exercise of mind, may not the complaint which the prophet took up formerly against some, be taken up against these, that their righteousness is “as a morning cloud; and as the early dew, it goeth away.”

These visitations have not been cherished; and there is a continuing still in a weak state, in a mixed state, in an unprofitable state, towards God: so that it may be said of some, as it was I think of Israel, that he was as an empty vine, he brought forth fruit unto himself. There are not such fruits found on some of these visited minds, as the Lord of mercy calls for; they are not fitted for his service in his church and among his people,

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as he designed they should be, although they are respectable among men ; although they are exercised in what may be called an honest industry, and some may also think, a laudable industry, yet the complaint is against them, as it was against Israel; “ Israel is an empty vine unto the Lord, he bringeth forth fruit unto himself.” And although they seem reputable, and sober, and orderly in their conduct compared with many others, yet their spirits are not fruitful towards God. My friends, examine yourselves: you who have been visited, you who have been favoured with a high and holy calling, and have heard the call and have rejoiced in it, have you attended to it, so as to have been redeemed out of the spirit of the world? I am ready to think that many, if they examine themselves in this particular, will see it very far from being the case; that however they seemed settled in a religious society, they are not settled in the truth, as our worthy predecessors were; not guided with zeal for the promotion of God’s honour. The complaint which was taken up against a people formerly, may be taken up against many of these, that they are gone up every one of them to their

own houses, and the Lord's house lies waste; they are seeking their own things, but not the things of God. Remember the concern of the Apostle that he might fully apprehend that, for which he was apprehended of God; but what were you apprehended of him for, what were you visited for, what were you called for, what were you settled under the profession of truth for?—not to rest down at ease in your minds, but, as you might be fitted for it, to become laborious members, and active in the church of Christ; each keeping under an humble exercise of mind that if he did but little for the truth, that he might do nothing against the truth, and so that you might increase in the experience of the powerful operation of the divine spirit on your spirits, as you advance in years. This, my friends, is certainly the intention of divine wisdom in apprehending of you, or calling you; and if you would settle under this exercise, I have no manner of doubt but that some of you might be brought out unto his help in the present day against the mighty, and you would be made serviceable in the society, which wants the help of its members, its quickened members, many of whom appear

pear to me but weak and dwarfish. Though they are quickened; divers appear to me to be in a languid, weak state. My friends, the Lord would not have it to be so, but that we should be strengthened for his service, and come up in his service with that strength which he vouchsafes, not with our own strength, nor with our own wisdom; no, no, this will never do; the Lord's work cannot be performed in their own will, for that never worked the righteousness of God, nor ever will. Oh! that some of you may come under a concern to be baptized into a spiritual sense of the present day: for indeed the labour of it is heavy on the shoulders of a very few, who see and lament many abominations that are committed among us, and the many stumbling blocks that there are, and that those who are as way marks have not strength to roll them away: though they may labour after it, have an earnest desire for it, may lament the state of some of the members of the society, and earnestly wish that it were not so, yet they have not strength to roll the stumbling blocks away, but must labour and travel forward under their burden and grievous oppression. My friends, why is there not
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among you in this city, where there is so large a number, sufficient strength to roll these stumbling blocks away, to set the testimony of truth over their heads, that they may not be a hindrance to those who are seeking their way to Zion, with their faces thitherward. I say there is not strength to roll the stumbling blocks away, because some of you do not put your shoulders unto the work, do not offer yourselves willingly to come up unto the Lord's help against the mighty; and oh! must I revive in your remembrance the curse which was passed upon some formerly, when one of Israel sounded an alarm unto the people and gathered them unto the battle; the inhabitants of Meroz were found wanting, and what is recorded respecting them, is recorded for our instruction; "Curse ye
" Meroz, said the angel of the Lord,
" curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof,
" because they came not to the help of the
" Lord against the mighty." My friends, there is no doubt, but they were employed in their temporal possessions; now I beseech it of you consider whether this is not the case with some of you, and whether you are not in some degree subject to divine displeasure on account thereof. It has seemed to me that
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there might be, if they were willing to be fitted, to be polished, there might be stones fitted for the heavenly building; so that we might gather strength and beauty as a religious society. Well, I do not wish to dwell long on this subject, but as it comes in my way; and as I stood up among you, my friends, under a real concern of heart for the members of our society whether they have had their education amongst us or not, I drop what has simply occurred; being desirous, if it may please divine wisdom and mercy so to favour me, that I may cast off among you that burden which has been on my spirit; and which I have been ready to think an insupportable burden. When I have looked to the society I have had a view of several states, and it has appeared evident that we are still a favoured society. I cannot help saying that we are the Lord's peculiar people; for I do not believe that there are among any people, those who walk more closely with God, than some of us as a people do; and there are none I believe better versed in the leadings and operations of his holy spirit, or experience him to be their shepherd more than some among us: consider how he
has

has favoured us with the manifestation of the principle of truth, and with testimonies committed unto us consistent therewith! It still appears to me, when I take a view of us, that we are the Lord's peculiar people, whatever others may think of us and speak lightly of us; yet I believe that there never was a people yet redeemed and brought so closely out of all superstitious practices inconsistent with the nature of the glorious gospel dispensation, out of all superficial forms, out of all self-reasonings: there never was a people, my friends, yet trained up since the primitive times, that were so purged in faith and practice, as we as a religious society have been. I am not afraid to say it, for I have looked through various modes of worship, and taken a view of some of the principles and practices of those that think highly of themselves, yet have beheld in them that mixture which is to be purged away, when the glorious gospel dispensation takes place; but when I take a view of us as a people, I mean, as consistent with our religious principles and practices, those mixtures do not appear; and there is a number among us who are concerned to walk consistently with the principle they make
profession

profession of and bear testimony to. So that looking at us as a religious people we are still the favoured people of the Lord, his owned people; I am not afraid to testify to it among you at this time, but I am not void of Christian charity to all other religious societies; believing that whosoever fears God, and works righteousness according to the manifestation of his will unto them, will be accepted of him: and I do not doubt at all but that he has many sheep that are not of our fold, some of whom he will bring in, so that there shall be more generally one shepherd, and one sheepfold. But notwithstanding he continues to be with us as a people, my friends, when I take a view of us throughout all our ranks, I am exceedingly pained, exceedingly distressed at times, because of the state of many individuals; some of whom are not worthy to bear the profession which they make, and my spirit has lamented over them; my spirit has lamented that they should be numbered amongst us as a people. I will tell you what has run through my mind while sitting in this meeting, and when looking towards the society, "How is the faithful city become an harlot." My friends, there
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are some whose spirits are alienated from God: however high they may stand, they have no fellowship with him, nor have they any right to have any fellowship with us as a people. Yea, further, it has run through my mind, “How is the faithful City become an harlot; it was full of judgment, righteousness lodged in it, but now murderers.” Is it so, my friends, look throughout all your ranks and into the conduct of individuals, and see if there be no occasion for a complaint of this kind; if any are acting inconsistently with the high and holy profession which they make, to that flagrant degree as to invalidate the testimonies of truth which have been given us to bear as a peaceable people, as a right-hearted people, as a people who were called to shew to others how they ought to walk, and how they ought to conduct themselves, and how clean-handed and clear-hearted they ought to be in all their practices in the course of life, and to lay hold of nothing which the Lord’s controversy is against. See I say, whether there be not some occasion for this complaint taken up of old, “How is the faithful City become an harlot; it was full of judgment, righteousness lodged
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“ed in it, but now murderers:” but I hope there may not be occasion for much complaint of this kind to be made. I speak in testimony unto the truth which I am jealous for, which I am zealous to promote by my religious labour after this manner; and while so engaged, am also concerned that my spirit may be seasoned with love; and that those that are afar off may be brought nigh, as well as that those that are nigh may acknowledge the might of the Lord; that we might be brought to bow as a people before him, to bow in truth and seek more earnestly to become united in his love, through the baptizing influence of his spirit on our spirits, than we have hitherto done. Oh! beloved youth, you that have been favoured, you that have been called, you that have been repeatedly visited, let me intreat it of you to open the door of your hearts. “Lift up your heads, oh, ye
“Gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting
“Doors, and the king of glory shall come
“in;” let the Lord make his entry into your hearts by his spirit, give room for it, my beloved friends, I intreat it of you; give room for the free spirit of God; let it have its operation, let it redeem you into a state of simplicity,
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let it redeem you into a state of humility, and then you will be brought into a state of true tenderness of mind, and in that tenderness you will become willing to offer yourselves to go up unto the Lord's help against the mighty; and it will be said of you as it was said of the princes of Israel who offered themselves willingly unto the Lord's help against the mighty. Oh that it may be so, and that it may not be said of our princes as it was said of some formerly, "Her princes are rebellious, and companions of thieves." My beloved friends, bow unto his appearance, that you may be clothed with that wisdom which comes from above; which is first "pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, without partiality, and without hypocrisy, full of mercy and good fruits." Oh! that you may seek this wisdom. Whatever station we may fill in the church of Christ, we must daily seek for divine aid, without which we shall remain in a state of weakness, and unfitness for service. We must wait on him for qualifications to come up in the discharge of our duties. Oh that this were the case in all our solemn meetings in which the affairs of the society are transacted; bowing in spirit before
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the Lord, and sitting before him in a state of humility, waiting on him for strength: but instead of that, is there not too great a dependence on human parts and human qualifications. My friends, see how it is with you; whether you are all of you properly qualified for the Lord's service, I intreat it of you; and be concerned that you may be fitted for the service of God and his church in your day. Servants are wanted, and the Lord of the harvest is willing to be intreated to send forth more faithful labourers into his harvest. If there is but a willingness to be fitted for his service, I fully believe there are some that will be qualified for it, and brought into it unto his praise, and the edification of his church. I am not speaking wholly as to the work of the ministry; I have no particular view to that service, but to the various services that are in the church of Christ: but we must be baptized deeply if we are to be of that number who are instrumental to build up Zion, and therefore I intreat it of you, be willing to go down deep into Jordan. You must go down again and again into Jordan if you become quite cleansed, and if you would come up fit for
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the service of the Lord in your day. Well, do not hesitate, my dear friends; for although it may seem discouraging to go so often to judgment, yet there is the support of the divine hand underneath: and when we come to love judgment, we are seeking the way of the Lord in the way of his judgments, for Zion is redeemed through judgment. Oh! that this might be the case with many of the visited youth among us as a people; that judgment might dwell in the wilderness of their hearts, that righteousness might be as in the fruitful field. Oh! that they might witness the work of righteousness to be peace, and the fruit to be quietness and assurance of Divine Favour for ever.

Shake yourselves from the dust of the earth, come out of that worldly state which too many are in; the world and the things of the world having principally engaged their attention. Shake yourselves from the dust of the earth, put on your beautiful garment, even the garment of righteousness, as in the days of old; that the promise which I think succeeded, may be fulfilled, “Henceforth
“they shall no more dwell among the un-
“circumcised or the unclean.” Oh! that
we

we might indeed become a holy nation, a peculiar people, a royal priesthood, who should shew forth the praises of him who hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light. If the faithful city is become an harlot, if the minds of the people are alienated from God, the fault is their own; his mercy is inconceivable, and his call is to the hindermost of the flock. “Return, O backsliding children:” “I will heal their backslidings, I will love them freely:” for he is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come unto the knowledge of his truth, and be saved; and he is still holding forth the shepherd’s crook of his love, even to those who have wandered far into the wilderness of this world: he is seeking their return, affectionately seeking their return, and causing them to be laboured with time after time. But it has appeared to me, friends, while sitting in this meeting, that the testimonies which may be borne unto many of the professors of truth do not sink down deep into their hearts, do not enter deeply into the ear of their souls; the labour of the gospel ministry is to them but as a pleasant song, as the prophet formerly said, that the people came

came to him as the Lord's people cometh, they sat before him as the Lord's people, they heard his words but would not do them: "With their mouth, saith the Lord, they do honour me, but with their heart they go after covetousness." I wish this may not be the case with some among us as a people, as well as among many others. I wish there may not be a considerable number whose hearts are exercised in covetous practices: if so, let them remember that they are subject to the righteous condemnation of God, let their religious profession be what it may. Do not therefore continue only in the form, and content yourselves with a name; but come to the examination of your conduct, and see whether there is not a cause for these complaints: and if there is, my beloved friends, be sincerely and earnestly desirous that the Lord may reign whose right it is, that there may be no more occasion for these complaints to be taken up against you as a people, and against individuals amongst us. But the complaint is not against all, as I have already hinted; there are some who, I believe, are concerned, what if I should say, to walk with God, and to witness their affections to be transferred

transferred from earth and earthly objects to heaven and heavenly enjoyments. Oh! my friends, these are precious in the sight of the Lord; although they may seem to be hid like precious stones among rubbish, they are exceedingly precious wherever their lots are cast: and though they may be suffered to lie hid with the rubbish, to such a degree, that they are ready to think it may be their lot even to become cast away, they are precious in the sight of the Lord: his penetrating eye sees them in this situation, and he will select them in his own time; he will bring them through every difficulty; he knows his own, my friends, wherever they are, and therefore let not these be too much discouraged, but let them endeavour to depend on him. For though they have lain among the pots, and perhaps been despised, they will be brought forth even as on the wings of a dove, which are as silver, and all her feathers of yellow gold. Their cups will overflow at times unto his praise, they will be of that number whom, when he makes up his jewels, he will spare, even as man spareth his son that serveth him. Well, my friends, I am glad to feel some small degree of the revelation of his love and life.

Oh! that the dead might so hear the voice of the quickening power of Christ, even the voice of the Son of God, as that they might live; might be raised from death unto life, and brought from under the power of satan, to be subject to the Lord's power. There are who are seeking their way to Zion, and have their eyes to us, and sit among us because of the benefit which they hope to receive. But alas! some of them appear to be discouraged when they mark the unsettled state of some of the professing members, that are acknowledged members. My friends, it is unto the principle of Divine Light and Life that you must gather, if you would be saved. And, blessed be the name of the Lord, the principle is still the same, and ever will continue to be a powerful, operative, life giving principle;—a principle that will do all for us that is necessary to be done for us;—a principle of Divine Grace which is able to build us up in the most holy faith, and to give us an inheritance amongst all those that are sanctified. If there is a settling down to this, and we are attentive to the call of the Shepherd and Bishop of souls in our hearts, we shall come to know his voice and follow him

him in such a manner as that we shall be established in this religious experience,—that great is the peace of the Lord's children. Oh that many people may have to witness it with us; may come to rejoice in a settlement in the truth, and be concerned to build on that foundation that stands sure; against which the gates of hell shall never prevail.

Well, my friends, I wish more earnestly than I can possibly express, that we may experience the Lord to be our shepherd, and have a comfortable hope that we shall not lack any thing that is good for us; that he will feed us in the green pastures and lead us beside the still waters. Oh! my friends, this is experience worth labouring for; I wish it may be precious in your view, that so you might attain it, and have to say in the conclusion of time, ‘Mercy and Truth have
‘been with me all the days of my life: I
‘shall dwell in the house of the Lord for
‘ever.’”

P R A Y E R

*Delivered at Westminster Meeting 5th Month
19th, 1782.*

By CATHERINE PHILLIPS.

Most gracious God! O Lord, the language that we desire to learn, through the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, is that of thee as our Father; the father of thy creatures, who knowest their wants, and how to administer to their necessities. In the inward sense that thou carest for them, they can at times look up unto thee with that humble confidence of thy care for them, and hope for the continuance of thy mercy, that “Our Father which art in heaven,” is their language; “hal-
lowed be thy name,” is the breathing of their souls; “thy kingdom come,” thy spiritual kingdom, is the petition which they put up unto thee. O Lord! may desires of this kind be raised more generally in the minds of thy people; who have been called unto,
season

season after season, to seek thee and the glory of thine excellent name, as their chief good: may their petitions be put up unto thee in sincerity. “Thy kingdom come, thy “will be done;” take to thyself the government of our spirits, work in them thy gracious will which thou hast manifested to our minds; that many may come to thee by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the holy Spirit of God, and give thanks to thee for thy assistance: for the children of men can do nothing without the aid of thy holy spirit, they cannot pray with acceptance, they cannot worship thee in spirit and in truth, unless thou art pleased in thy abundant mercy to assist them and afford them thy spirit from time to time, to enable them to come to the throne of grace, and to put up their petitions acceptably to thee. “Lord! teach us to “pray,” was the language of the disciples of thy beloved Son formerly; and it continues to be the language of those who feel, who are sensible they know not how to pray, nor what to pray for, but as the spirit helpeth their infirmities; may thy people in a general way seek for a sense of their own insufficiency to perform any acceptable service before thee,

thee, that they may witness the operation of thy spirit upon their spirits, preparing thanksgiving and praise, as well as helping them to pour forth their souls unto thee. O! pour out thy spirit, that each of us may worship thee in thy temple, even the temple of our hearts; grant that we may come under a more united concern that this temple may be cleansed, that it may be made a solemn house of prayer, that we may be sensible of thy living presence in that temple upon these occasions and in these seasons; and, therefore, bow in humble reverence before thee, and thankfully acknowledge that thou art worthy to be praised, that thou art God and changeest not. Therefore, thy children who are led by thy power, (a number of whom are so sensible of this that they) can acknowledge to thee, that if thou hadst not been on our side we had fainted long ago; but, blessed be thy name, thou hast helped from time to time, though it sometimes seems to have been as with a little help, and we have been enabled to hold on our way: thus can we set up our memorial “hitherto hast thou helped us.” What have we to pray for, but that thou, who hast been with us hitherto, wilt be with us

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to the end, wilt supply our wants, wilt support our spirits, wilt strengthen our hands in the day of battle, teach us what to do and what to leave undone, and more and more conform our wills to thy holy will, favouring us with patience in the time of trial; so that thy name may be as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land, and, under the covert of thy wings, that we may take our refuge in seasons of difficulties and distress, until thou art pleased in thy wisdom to change the dispensations of thy providence to us. O Lord! may the spirits of thy children be enabled from season to season to look up to thee as their father, and experience indeed that thou art dispensing portions to them; that they may bless and praise thy eminent name, who, for the multitude of thy mercies both ancient and new, art worthy of living praise. Be pleased to inspire us, is the language of thy humble children; be pleased to prepare a sacrifice of living acceptable praise; for we cannot praise thee either with our heart or lips, acceptably, nor even in spirit worship before thee, unless thou art pleased to humble our hearts by thy power. Oh! that we may

become more sensible of it; that we may from one opportunity of this kind to another worship thee in spirit, and say, thou art worthy of worship and honour, thanksgiving and praise. Amen.

A DISCOURSE

*Delivered at the Meeting-House in Westminster,
17th of 5th Month, 1780.*

By CATHERINE PHILLIPS.

THE purity, spirituality, and efficacy of the Christian faith is only clearly manifested unto such as are concerned that they may hold the mystery of it in a pure conscience. These are acquainted with the nature of this faith, and with the manner of its operating upon their spirits, in order to effect that for which it is appointed, in purifying the conscience, cleansing it from sin, from dead unprofitable works, and bringing it into a state wherein man can serve the living God in newness of life. This is the work of faith, of pure, living, gospel faith; without which we can never obtain the victory over our souls enemies: and if any of us have what they may call—a faith, which has not been productive

of this work in any degree, they may conclude, according to the apostles testimony, that it is a dead faith, an unprofitable faith, if it deserve that name. It has done nothing for them, nor will it ever recommend them to acceptance with the Father through his beloved Son Jesus Christ. I will therefore endeavour to put those here assembled upon the solemn and necessary examination “whether they are
“in the faith;”—that true powerful faith wherein the saints victory has ever stood; whereby the world, the flesh, and the devil, may be overcome.

We call ourselves Christians, we most if not all of us profess to be the disciples of Christ; but our taking upon us that name, that may portend our having a belief on Christ, will do nothing for us, unless we are ingrafted into him by his living efficacious spirit: therefore it is as necessary now for professed believers in him to examine themselves and try themselves, and see whether they are in this faith, as it was for those to whom the apostle wrote, with whom he queries, “What? know ye not your own selves; how that Jesus Christ is in you unless ye
“be reprobates!” This is one point of the
true

true Christian faith which many of the professors of Christianity are unacquainted with : some of them are in such a state of sorrowful ignorance that they even mock at it, and are not afraid to think and speak contemptuously of those who have been better instructed; who are sensible (agreeable to scripture doctrine) that, “if any man have not the Spirit of “ Christ, he is none of his;” and who have been confirmed in the faith of the universality of the love of God to mankind through him, when they read that he “lead captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men:” he gave them (says the apostle when he recurred to this prophecy, which went before, of his coming, of his death, and of his work) for this purpose, “that the Most High might “ dwell amongst them,” and even unto the rebellious he gave these gifts; so that other testimony of the apostle stands confirmed by this, that “the grace of God, which “ bringeth salvation, hath appeared unto all “ men:” and a third may be added to them, which is, “the manifestation of the Spirit “ given to every man to profit withal,” yea and many more which time at the present will fail me to cite. But this we may learn
from

from them all, as well as from the nature of God, that unto every one of us is given grace for our help in time of need; which grace is that “ true light which ” we read, “ enlighteneth every man that cometh into the “ world.” Christ the light of the world, is certainly in us, unless we are reprobates; if we are reprobates the fault is our own, because we have sinned out the day of the Lord’s merciful visitation unto our souls, and are therefore given up to a reprobate mind, to work those things which are not convenient. You may observe, such of you as have been conversant with what is written in the Scriptures of Truth, that this was the case of some in former days, of whom the apostle writes, that they did not like to retain God in their thoughts: they had known him, he had manifested himself unto them, because what is to be known of God he manifested in them: he had opened their understandings by his free grace, his infallible grace, but “ when they knew God they glorified him not as God; but became vain in “ their imaginations, and their foolish heart “ was darkened,” insomuch, that they went on from one degree of rebellion against God

to another, until they were given up to this reprobate mind, to work those things which are not convenient. The grace of God through Jesus Christ is universal; but it is not impossible that mankind may resist this grace against themselves, though it is a powerful, efficacious principle of light and life, and is able to effect the work for which it is given; even to effect our salvation through what Christ has done for us, without us;—this is what this holy principle of divine grace is able to do for us, within us. It will not force salvation upon us against our consent; we may resist it against ourselves, and do despite unto it, as we read in the scripture some did; and putting a slight upon so great salvation brought to light through the gracious gospel of Christ, we may miss of it: and after having been endured with in much long suffering, as we read even the vessels of wrath had been who were fitted for destruction, the Lord may withdraw his good Spirit from us; “for, says he,” “my Spirit shall not always strive with man.” If this should be the case of any present, they will certainly drop into this unhappy, deplorable state of reprobation. My friends, as the will of God is our sanctification thro’ the Spirit

Spirit of his son, the manifestation thereof is given to every one of us to profit withal; and every one of us who is acquainted with it, will not sit down satisfied in the bare profession of faith in Christ and in his holy doctrines, without being really in the true Christian faith. Examine yourselves, I say again, try yourselves, whether you are in the faith. “What, know you not your ownelves, how “that Jesus Christ is in you,” by a measure of his own free spirit, “unless ye be repro-
“bates.” Have you so long professed Christianity and been unacquainted with the glorious privileges of the gospel dispensation under which the Lord first taught his people himself; under which, blessed be his name, his children are taught of him, instructed by his free Spirit in their duty to him, have their understandings opened to the nature and importance of that work which is absolutely necessary to be wrought in them, and for them, by the powerful coming of the son of God; even the work of regeneration, without which none of us can (any more than mankind could in the days of our Lord) bear testimony to this truth;—to receive the kingdom of God we must be born again of the Spirit.

Spirit. My beloved fellow-professors of faith in Christ, if we are found in him who is truth, if we are acceptable unto God the Father, we must witness a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness; we must be changed in the spirit of our minds, and put off the old man with his deeds, by the cross, with the many deceitful lusts that are in the world, and be clothed upon with the new man, which is built up in righteousness and true holiness. This is the work of faith, true, living, operative faith, in the manifestation or revelation of the Son of God, in our own souls, whereby we become new creatures; if we are partakers of this faith we are new creatures. "If any man," says the apostle, "be
" in Christ, he is a new creature; old
" things are passed away; behold all things
" are become new. And all things are
" of God, who hath reconciled us to him-
" self by Jesus Christ." Examine yourselves my friends: and you who are here assembled to hear this doctrine, are you thus reconciled to God the Father through Jesus Christ? If you are not, you are in a state of alienation from him, are strangers to the commonwealth of Israel, and have no well-grounded

grounded hope of a part in the covenant of promise. My friends, is not this of the highest concernment? you will find it so in that solemn, awful, important season which is hastening upon every one of us: if we are not clothed with the righteousness of Christ, if we have not been so baptized into him as to put him on, if we are not in that disposition wherein he stood fully acceptable with the Father, we are not likely to be accepted of him, in and through his gracious mediation. Therefore see what your profession of faith and religion has done for you; examine yourselves, and see whether faith has worked by love, and whether the blessed effects of its operation upon your spirits have been the purifying of you, the cleansing of your consciences, and the making of your hearts fit tabernacles for the Lord to dwell in. “Know ye not,” says the apostle, “that ye are the temple of God;” and he will not dwell in an unclean temple. He condescends to tabernacle with men; the universal gift of his grace to men through Jesus Christ is, that they by experience may have God dwelling in them, and walking in them, and instructing them, and feeding them, (I mean

mean their souls) with the bread of life, and replenishing them with the wine of his kingdom; and as this was heretofore the case, it continues to be the same unto this day. Shall we slight these glorious privileges which are manifest under the gospel dispensation? Shall we be so blind to our souls interest? Shall we be so blind to our happiness, both in time and eternity, as to sit down contented without the experience of these things? Shall any of us rest in an unprofitable form, which we may call a form of godliness, and content ourselves with a name and profession of faith in Christ, without being brought into that disposition and state, wherein we can worship God in spirit and truth, in the beauty of holiness, and walk before him in newness of life, which is a fruit of this living powerful efficacious Spirit.

My friends, I wish professing Christians under all names were better acquainted with these things, that they might be able to say as one did formerly, "blessed be God who "has given me the victory." He obtained the victory through his true faith, and we shall never obtain it in any other way, or by any other means; therefore, I say, believe
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in him whom God has sent, for this is the first work upon the soul: believe in him whom God has sent, not only in the outward and bodily appearance of his beloved Son, and what he did for you without you, but believe in his spiritual appearance, believe in his second coming unto the salvation of your souls, believe in the manifestation of his free spirit, and you will be instructed thereby if you are willing to be of the number of those who are saved; for that Spirit will instruct you, as it instructed the primitive believers, and has instructed a number through all ages to the present time, to deny all ungodliness and the world's lusts of every kind; it will make an end of sin, make reconciliation for iniquity, and finish transgression, and in the room thereof everlasting life will be produced, which is the end proposed by the coming of the Son of God and his giving himself for mankind: he made an end of sin, and finished transgression, and brought in everlasting righteousness.

He "gave himself," says the apostle, "that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." This was
the

the end proposed by his coming, and shall any dare to say the end shall not be answered? Shall any boldly affirm that he is unequal to the work which God has appointed him to do? Shall any charge God with being so foolish as to appoint a means that will not accomplish the end. If this was the end of sending his Son into the world in the flesh and in the spirit, think you his end cannot be accomplished? do the means he has appointed fail? I hope none will boldly assert that thus it may be; or that it is impossible that sin should be put an end to and transgression finished in the present state, because it is further written concerning some of the Jews, that they should die in their sins, and “where “I am,” said Christ, “ye cannot come.” Indeed, from various texts of scripture, from the doctrine which dropped from the lips of the Lord Jesus, we may conclude that sin ever did and ever will make a separation between God and the soul of man; and if we die in our sins, our souls are not prepared for admittance into his glorious presence, because nothing that defileth, or that worketh abomination, or maketh a lie, can ever be admitted thereinto. We must therefore put
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off our sins by repentance, which is rendered possible through his beloved Son Jesus Christ, that we may cause our sins to go before hand to judgment, that we may experience the body of the sins of the flesh crucified, through the operation of this word of living faith which I have testified of amongst you at this time, and that we may experience the remission of our sins, and partake of an inheritance amongst all them who are sanctified, which was the end proposed by the apostle's ministry and labours. They preached this doctrine for this end, that they might turn people from darkness to light, and from the power of satan unto God; that they might witness remission of their sins, and have an inheritance granted unto them amongst all them who are sanctified. This is possible in every age and every part of the world, and it is effected; for the divine power is not changed, nor is his kingdom altered; no unclean spirit shall ever be admitted thereinto.

The Lord can wash us and sanctify us through the powerful operation of his word in our hearts. Therefore my beloved friends, and you who are here present, let me intreat you to believe herein, and to wait for the operation

operation thereof ; that you may be acquainted with the manifestation of this true light in your souls, that you may order your conduct and conversation agreeable thereto, and lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset ; let us run with patience the race which divine wisdom has set before us, according to the manifestation of his grace, and live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world. Oh ! what a change would there be amongst professing Christians if they generally believed in this grace, and waited for the operation of it upon their spirits ? How would this world be altered ? All confusion would cease ; peace on earth would take place, and good will towards men would be manifest. We hear of wars and rumours of wars ; it would be manifested that all these wars and tumults came from the unbridled lusts of the creature : but the grace of God regulates the passions and brings the mind into the meekness of the gospel of Christ. This grace will put an end to the cause of wars, and where the cause is removed, the effect will cease. It would be seen under the gospel dispensation that men must beat their swords into plowshares ; the words of
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the prophet must be fulfilled; and, blessed be God, it has been fulfilled, in some measure, that men shall “beat their swords into
“ plowshares and spears into pruning hooks,
“ that nation shall not lift up sword against
“ nation, neither shall they learn war any
“ more;” and, when the gospel shall cover the earth as the water covers the depths of the sea, this gracious prediction of the holy spirit will no doubt be fulfilled. We have reason to bless the name of the Lord that it has already been fulfilled (though in but a small number in the past age or ages); for there hath been some in the various ages of the Christian church, who have seen and testified that the spirit of war is inconsistent with the spirit of Christianity; that if they were brought into the full government of the Spirit of Christ, the occasion of war would cease; that it would be their duty to testify against it in word and practice: this is but the beginning of this work. When men’s minds shall be reduced into the meekness of the patience and kingdom of Christ, it will go forward in the earth. The Lord will yet open the understandings of many of the professors of Christianity, and shew them how contrary

trary the practice of the far greater number of professors is to the holy profession they make, to the nature of this pure, this heavenly, this renovating faith, that would so change the different natures of mankind, that though their nature be as different as the nature of the lion and the lamb, they should lie down and feed together, and there should be nothing to hurt or to destroy in all the Lord's holy mountain, because the knowledge of God will cover the hearts of his people in the earth, even as the water covers the depths of the sea; and we trust these prophecies will more generally be accomplished in the Lord's time. It is unexpectedly that I am led into these matters in this assembly. I had no foresight of it, till I stood upon my feet; but there was a testimony raised in my heart to the purity and spirituality of the Christian faith, which is only manifested to those who are concerned to hold the mystery thereof in a pure conscience, which the carnally minded man cannot comprehend with all his wisdom and learning; all his searches after it will be in vain, without he is possessed of this powerful efficacious faith; therefore my friends let
me

me beseech you to seek to establish yourselves in the faith ; if you seek it in this way, your understanding may be opened by that living word which divides between the precious and the vile, which will discover the thoughts of your hearts, and, if they are evil, will bring judgment over your spirits for them.

This is the way for you to be well instructed in the kingdom of God. I say a carnally minded man cannot comprehend this faith ; he has no part in it ; it is not by wisdom that man can comprehend the things of God ; by wisdom the world knew not God ; it is not the wisdom of the world that can reveal these things, it must be revealed by the spirit of God, for as the things of a man are only comprehended by the spirit of a man, so the things of God are only known by the spirit of God. It is the glorious dispensation of the gospel under which people are effectually gathered to the Lord ; for all who are brought under this dispensation know him from the least unto the greatest ; they know him to be merciful to their unrighteousness, and that their sins and iniquities he will remember no more ; they know him to be a
father

father to them, and that they are his sons and daughters: as such, they can look up to him in every time of need, and breathe their wants to him as a tender father who cares for them, who will supply them, and knows their circumstances altogether.

My friends, time will fail me to set forth these glorious privileges of the gospel. Oh! that men were better acquainted with them; and were pressing after an experience of them, that many might be turned from the paths of folly, from the paths of vanity and wickedness to seek after that holy way which has been manifested to the righteous in all ages, and which leads to the kingdom of God. There is no other way we ought to prize in the present state of being, or by which we shall be admitted into that rest which is appointed for the people of God; therefore let me beseech you, seek the Lord while he may be found; “boast not thyself of to-morrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth;” certainly there is a season appointed for all men to die, and after death to come to judgment. Oh! my friends, how deplorable will be the case of your immortal souls, if you are not prepared to stand with acceptance before
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the judgment-seat of Christ, from whom we must all receive a reward according to our works. And as this work which I have been pointing out to you, is so absolutely necessary to be done, and can only be done in the day of the Lord's visitation to our souls; let me intreat it of you while it is called to-day, (and let me say to some of you the day is far spent and the night is at hand) thou knowest not what a day may bring forth, and how soon this alarming message may be brought to thee, "Set thine house in order, for thou shalt die" and not live." It seems as if I could not conclude without dropping a few remarks of this kind as they passed upon my mind while sitting in silence, though I did not know that I should stand up with them, or that they would be brought to my remembrance in the course of this meeting; but I wish to have people awakened (though I find it difficult to awaken them, they have such a stupified mind) to hear what the spirit says to the churches. Consider your state, you who make a profession of these glorious gospel truths; see what you know of them, and what is the exercise of your spirits; do not clothe yourselves with the name, if you have a name to live,

live, and are dead, if you profess the form of godliness, but deny the power of it, you will be in a miserable state, if you continue in this state to the end of time. Let me say to all who are not awake to righteousness, but deluded by the world, the flesh and the devil, “Awake to righteousness, and sin not;” for “some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame.”

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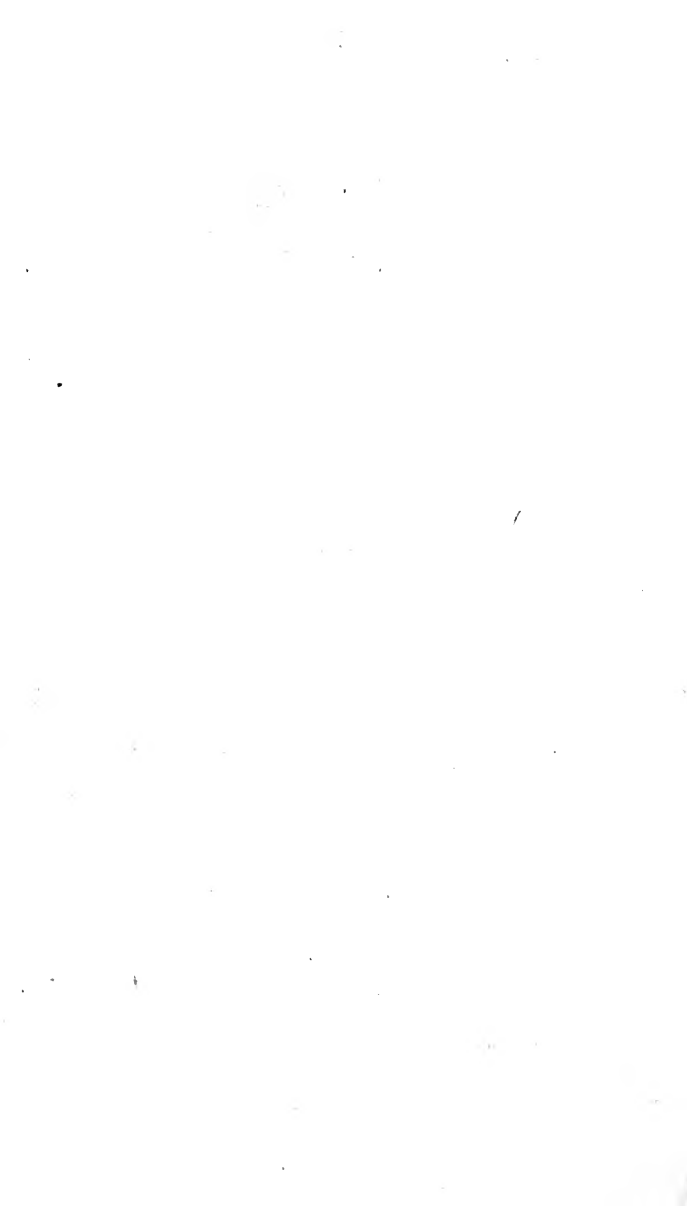
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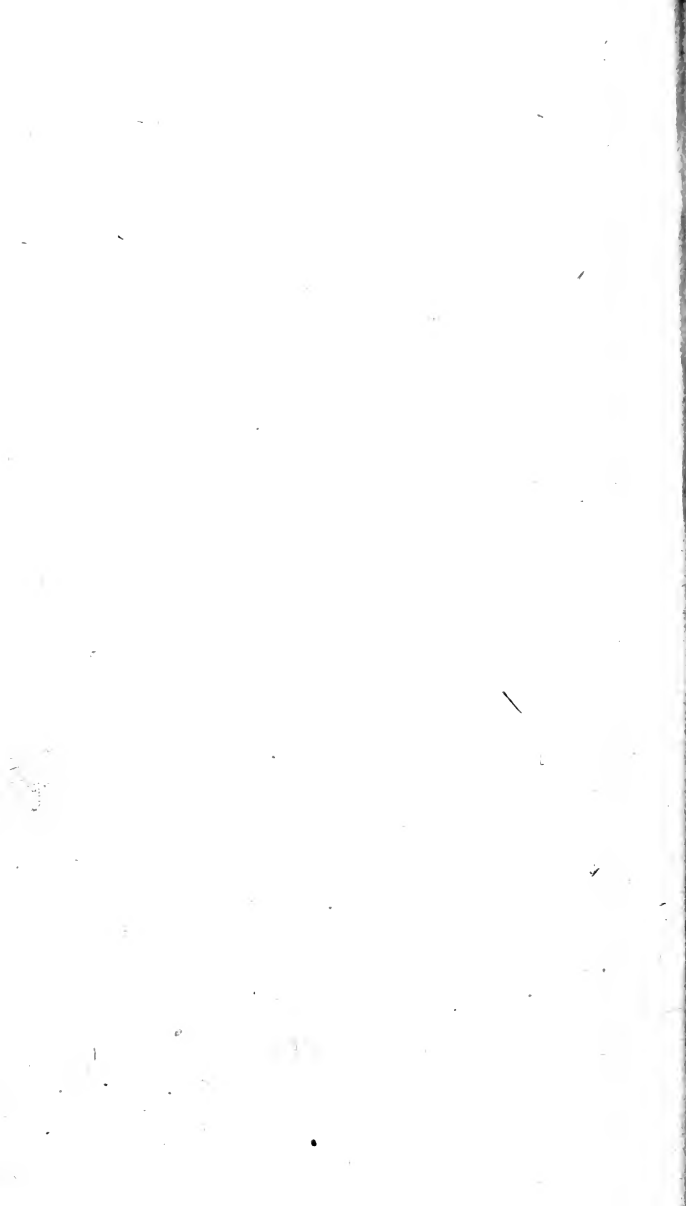
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